

THE PYTHAGOREAN *GOLDEN VERSES*

RELIGIONS IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

FORMERLY

ÉTUDES PRÉLIMINAIRES
AUX RELIGIONS ORIENTALES
DANS L'EMPIRE ROMAIN

EDITORS

R. VAN DEN BROEK H.J.W. DRIJVERS
H.S. VERSNEL

VOLUME 123



THE PYTHAGOREAN *GOLDEN VERSES*

With Introduction and Commentary

BY

JOHAN C. THOM



E.J. BRILL
LEIDEN · NEW YORK · KÖLN
1995

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The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development (HSRC, South Africa) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Golden verses. English & Greek.

The Pythagorean golden verses : with introduction and commentary /
by Johan C. Thom.

p. cm. (Religions in the Graeco-Roman world, ISSN
0927 7633 ; v. 123)

Greek text with English translation and commentary.

Revision of J.C. Thom's thesis (Ph. D.) University of Chicago,
1990.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 9004101055 (alk. paper)

1. Pythagoras and Pythagorean school. 2. Golden verses.

3. Conduct of life Early works to 1900. 4. Spiritual life-- Early
works to 1800. 5. Aphorisms and apothegms. I. Thom, Johan Carl,
1954 . II. Title. III. Series.

B243.G64 1994

182'.2 dc20

94-35319

CIP

Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Thom, Johan C.:

The Pythagorean Golden Verses : with introduction and
commentary / by Johan C. Thom. Leiden ; New York ; Köln :
Brill, 1994

(Religions in the Graeco-Roman world ; Vol. 123)

ISBN 90 04 10105 5

NE: Pythagoras: The golden verses; GT

ISSN 0927-7633

ISBN 90 04 10105 5

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Danvers MA 01923, USA.
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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

τῇ Σ.
— ἄλλη ἐγώ

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PREFACE

Although the *Golden Verses* (Χρυσὴ ἔπη; also known by the Latin title *Carmen aureum*) is relatively unknown today even among classicists, this was not always the case. The poem was well known to educated readers in Antiquity, and even in more recent times it regularly found a place in school editions of Greek poetry. The poem's fortune changed, however, under the onslaught of what may perhaps be described as a hypercritical reaction during the second half of the previous century. I hope to be able to demonstrate in the present work that the poem is indeed worthy of more extensive scholarly attention.

The present study is a completely revised version of a 1990 Ph.D. dissertation supervised by Professor Hans Dieter Betz of the University of Chicago. My original intention was simply to compare the *Golden Verses* with early Christian writings as a contribution to the *Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*. I soon discovered, however, that this relatively short poem demanded extensive treatment in its own right, which left less time and space for early Christian material. The focus of the present work is thus more precisely the religio-historical significance of the *Golden Verses*. I am therefore particularly pleased that the editors of the *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* series were willing to accept this book for publication.

How does one justify a commentary of this length for a poem of only seventy-one verses? In the first place, the poem represents a relatively unknown period of the Pythagorean tradition: the formative years of Hellenistic Pythagoreanism which had a major impact on the morality and philosophy of the Greco-Roman world. Perhaps even more important is the fact that the poem was very popular among Greek and Latin authors (including Christians) of the first centuries of the present era, which is an indication that it represented the moral and religious values of a broad spectrum of educated people. Furthermore, a reading of the *Golden Verses* soon reveals that what is offered in the poem is only the tip of an iceberg: the poem is based on, and refers to moral topics and philosophical doctrines that are either assumed as widely known, or promised as insights to come. Both these factors make for lengthy

discussions: to change the metaphor, the scholar needs to dig deep beneath the surface of the poem to reveal the roots or foundations of ideas with which the original readers would have been familiar.

Since the introductory questions pertaining to the dating, genre, and composition of the *Golden Verses* have not yet been resolved, a considerable portion of this book is devoted to a discussion of these issues. The text of the *Golden Verses* printed after the introduction is based on the Teubner edition by Ernst Diehl and Douglas Young (1971). I am grateful to the publisher for permission to use this text. A new translation of the poem is provided since there is no reliable English translation available. In the commentary itself I have focused on two aspects of the poem that have not received adequate treatment in previous scholarship, namely, its composition and its relation to other Greco-Roman moral and religious writings. As to the former, I hope to be able to convince the reader that—contrary to the prejudice against gnomic material in general and the *Golden Verses* in particular—the poem was composed with some care. In comparing the *Golden Verses* with other texts I have concentrated on those writings that would serve to put the genre and contents of the poem in perspective, namely Greco-Roman gnomic and moral texts. Since the poem is associated with a form of Pythagoreanism, reference to other Pythagorean material is made as far as possible.

I am grateful to Professor Betz who introduced me to the *Golden Verses*, and indeed to the Hellenistic moral and religious world in general. His enthusiastic and careful scholarship will remain a source of inspiration. Other teachers and friends who contributed directly or indirectly to this book, are Robert Grant, Arthur Adkins, and Arthur Droge. A special word of thanks is due to Elizabeth Asmis, who meticulously worked through a draft version and who made numerous suggestions to improve the book. Any remaining defects are of course my sole responsibility. Finally, this book would not have been possible without the constant support and valuable criticism of my wife Sjarlene.

Stellenbosch
June 1994

Johan Thom

ABBREVIATIONS

1 *Periodicals, Series, Reference Works, Collections*

<i>ABG</i>	<i>Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte</i>
<i>AC</i>	<i>L'Antiquité classique</i>
<i>AJPh</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
Bauer-Aland	Walter Bauer, <i>Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur</i> (6th ed. by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988)
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
BDR	Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, <i>Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch</i> (15th ed. by Friedrich Rehkopf; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979)
BEvT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BT	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
Budé	Collection des Universités de France, publié sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé
BZNW	Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
CAG	Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca
<i>ChHist</i>	<i>Church History</i>
Christ-Schmid-Stählin	<i>Wilhelm von Christ's Geschichte der griechischen Literatur 2</i> (6th ed. by Wilhelm Schmid and Otto Stählin; Munich: Beck, 1920–24)
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Graecarum</i>
<i>CM</i>	<i>Clio Medica</i>
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica, New Testament
<i>CPh</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CronErc</i>	<i>Cronache Ercolanesi</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
frg. Diehl	<i>Anthologia lyrica</i> , ed. E. Diehl (see <i>Bibliography</i>)
DK	Hermann Diels, <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> (3 vols.; 6th ed. by Walther Kranz; Berlin: Weidmann, 1951–52)
<i>EEThess(philos)</i>	Ἐπιστημονικὴ ἐπετηρίδα τῆς φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Ἀριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης, Τμήμα φιλοσοφίας
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
<i>FPG</i>	<i>Fragmenta philosophorum Graecorum</i> , ed. F. W. A. Mulach (Paris: Didot, 1860–81)
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen

	Testaments
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HPLS	<i>History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences</i>
HThR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
IK	Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien
frg. Jacoby	F. Jacoby, ed., <i>Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Leiden: Brill, 1923–)
JbAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JS	<i>Journal des savants</i>
Kühner-Gerth	Raphael Kühner, <i>Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache 2: Satzlehre</i> (3d ed. by Bernhard Gerth; Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1898–1904)
Kl. Pauly	<i>Der Kleine Pauly</i>
frg. Kock	T. Kock, ed., <i>Comicorum Atticorum fragmenta</i> (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880–84)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LPGL	G. W. H. Lampe, ed., <i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961)
LSJ	Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (9th ed. by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie; Oxford: Clarendon, 1940); <i>Supplement</i> , ed. E. A. Barber (Oxford, 1968)
MH	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
frg. Nauck	August Nauck, ed., <i>Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta</i> (2d ed.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1889)
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OCD	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , 2d ed.
PG	J. Migne, <i>Patrologiae Graecae</i>
PGM	<i>Papyri Graecae magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri</i> , ed. Karl Preisendanz (2d ed. by Albert Henrichs; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–74)
PW	Pauly-Wissowa, <i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
PWSup	Supplement to PW
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
RBPh	<i>Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire</i>
REG	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
RFIC	<i>Rivista di filologia e d'istruzione classica</i>
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> , 3d ed.
RGVV	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
RHR	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
SBAW	Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse
SBSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Studies
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SCHNT	Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SHAW	Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissen-

<i>SIG</i>	schaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse <i>Sylloge inscriptionum Graecarum</i> , ed. Wilhelm Dittenberger (3d ed.; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–24)
<i>SO</i>	<i>Symbolae Osloenses</i>
<i>SVTP</i>	Studia in Veteris Testamentis Pseudepigrapha
<i>SVF</i>	<i>Stoicorum veterum fragmenta</i> , comp. Hans von Arnim (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–24); cited by volume and fragment; when necessary also by page and line
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TextsS	Texts and Studies
Thesleff	Thesleff, <i>Pythagorean Texts</i> ; see <i>Bibliography</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TWNT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WS	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YCIS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>

2 Ancient Authors

Apart from the following, I use the abbreviations in the *OCD* for classical authors, and those in *JBL* 107/3 (1988) 584 for biblical and early Christian texts. The full titles of ancient works are also given in the *Index Locorum*.

Ammonius in <i>Porph.</i>	Ammonius <i>In Porphyrii Isagogen sive v voces</i> (ed. Adolfus Busse; CAG 4/3; Berlin: Reimer, 1891)
Apollonius of Tyana <i>Ep.</i>	Robert J. Penella, ed., <i>The Letters of Apollonius of Tyana</i> (Mnemosyne Supplement 56; Leiden: Brill, 1979)
Arethas <i>Scripta min.</i>	<i>Arethae archiepiscopi Caesariensis Scripta minora</i> , ed. L. G. Westerink (Leipzig: Teubner, 1968–72)
Ἄριστον καὶ πρῶτον μάθημα	Heinrich Schenkl, “Das Florilegium Ἄριστον καὶ πρῶτον μάθημα,” <i>WS</i> 11 (1889) 9–40
Aristotle frg. Rose	<i>Aristotelis fragmenta</i> , ed. Valentin Rose (Leipzig: Teubner, 1886)
Aristoxenus frg. Wehrli	see Wehrli in <i>Bibliography</i>
Ausonius	<i>D. Magni Ausonii opuscula</i> , ed. Carolus Schenkl (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883)
Chares frg.	<i>Sentences of Chares</i> fragments (<i>Menandri Sententiae</i> , ed. Jäkel, 26–30; see Menander <i>Sent.</i>)
Clitarchus	Clitarchus, in Chadwick, <i>Sentences of Sextus</i> , 76–83; see <i>Bibliography</i>
<i>Cologne Mani Codex</i>	Ron Cameron and Arthur J. Dewey, trans., <i>The Cologne Mani Codex</i> (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780): “Concerning the Origin of his Body” (SBLTT 15; Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1979)
<i>Corp. Herm.</i>	<i>Corpus Hermeticum</i> , ed. Nock and Festugière; see <i>Bibliography</i>
David <i>Proll.</i>	David <i>Prolegomena philosophiae</i> (ed. Adolfus Busse; CAG 18/2; Berlin: Reimer, 1904)
Elias in <i>Porph.</i>	Elias <i>In Porphyrii Isagogen</i> (<i>Eliae in Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis categorias commentaria</i> , ed. Adolfus Busse [CAG

- Empedocles frg. Wright
 Epicurus frg. Usener
Ep. Pyth.
Eustratius in EN

Exc. Herm. Stob.
 Galen *Affect. dignot.*
Gnom. Byz.
Gnom. Epict.
Gnom. hom.
Gnom. Vat.
 GV
 Heraclides Ponticus frg.
 Hesiod frg.
 Hierocles in CA
 Hippocrates *Lex*
 Iamblichus Arab. in CA
 Irenaeus *Haer.*
 Jerome c. *Rufin.*
 Linus frg.
 Macrobius in *Somn. Scip.*
Men. et Phil. Comp.
 Menander
 frg. Körte and Thierfelder
 Sent.
 Methodius *Symp.*
 Or.
 Origen frg. in *Ps.*
- 18/1; Berlin: Reimer, 1900])
 see Wright in *Bibliography*
 Hermann Usener, ed., *Epicurea* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887)
Epistulae Pythagoricae, ed. Städele; see *Bibliography*
 Eustratius *In Ethica Nicomachea commentaria (Eustratii et Michaelis et anonyma in Ethica Nicomachea commentaria*, ed. Gustav Heylbut [CAG 20; Berlin: Reimer, 1892])
Excerpta Hermetica ex Stobaei, ed. Nock and Festugière; see *Corp. Herm.*
 Galen *De propriorum animi cuiuslibet affectuum dignotione et curatione* (ed. Wilko de Boer [Corpus medicorum Graecorum 5/4/1/1; Leipzig: Teubner, 1937] 1–37)
Gnomologium Byzantinum, ed. Curt Wachsmuth (*Studien zu den griechischen Florilegien* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1882] 162–216)
Gnomologium Epicteteum, ed. Henricus Schenkl (*Epicteti Dissertationes ab Arriani digestae* [2d ed., 1916; reprint, Stuttgart: Teubner, 1965] 476–92)
 Anton Elter, *Gnomica homoeomata* (5 pts.; Bonn: Georgi, 1900–4) 5.1*–40*
 Leo Sternbach, *Gnomologium Vaticanum e codice Vaticano Graeco 743* (Texte und Kommentare 2; reprint, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963)
Golden Verses
 Fritz Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles 7: Herakleides Pontikos* (2d ed.; Basel: Schwabe, 1969)
Fragmenta Hesiodica, ed. R. Merkelbach and M. L. West (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967)
Hieroclis in Aureum Pythagoreorum carmen commentarius, ed. Köhler; see *Bibliography*
Hippocratis opera 1.1, ed. I. L. Heiberg (Corpus medicorum Graecorum 1/1; Leipzig: Teubner, 1927) 7–8
 Iamblichus Arabus *In Carmen aureum commentarius* (ed. and trans. Daiber; see *Bibliography*)
 Irenaeus *Adversus haereses* (*Irénée de Lyon: Contre les hérésies*, ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau [SC 263–64, 293–94, 210–11, 99–100, 152–53; Paris: Cerf, 1965–82])
 Jerome *Contra Rufinum*
 West, *Orphic Poems*, 62–67; see *Bibliography*
 Macrobius *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* (ed. Iacobus Willis; Leipzig: Teubner, 1963)
Menandri et Philistionis Comparatio (Menandri Sententiae, ed. Jäkel, 87–120; see *Menander Sent.*)
Menandri quae supersunt 2, ed. A. Körte and A. Thierfelder (2d ed.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1959)
Menandri Sententiae, ed. Siegfried Jäkel (Leipzig: Teubner, 1964)
 Methodius *Symposium*
Orationes
 Origen *fragmenta in Psalmis (Commentaires inédits des Psaumes: Étude sur les textes d'Origène contenus dans le manuscrit Vindobonensis 8*, ed. René Cadiou [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1936])

Orphic frg. Kern	<i>Orphicorum fragmenta</i> , coll. Kern; see <i>Bibliography</i>
Philo	
<i>Dec.</i>	<i>De decalogo</i>
<i>Quod det.</i>	<i>Quod deterius potiori insidiari solet</i>
<i>Sobr.</i>	<i>De sobrietate</i>
<i>Somn. I</i>	<i>De somnis I</i>
<i>Spec. leg. II</i>	<i>De specialibus legibus II</i>
<i>Vit. cont.</i>	<i>De vita contemplativa</i>
Plutarch frg. Sandbach	<i>Plutarch's Moralia 15: Fragments</i> , ed. F. H. Sandbach (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969)
Porphry <i>Marc.</i>	Porphry <i>Ad Marcellam</i>
Posidonius frg.	<i>Posidonius 1: The Fragments</i> , ed. L. Edelstein and I. G. Kidd (Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries 13; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972)
Proclus <i>in Tim.</i>	Proclus <i>In Platonis Timaeum commentarii</i> (ed. Ernst Diehl; Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–6); cited by book, page, and line
Proclus Arab. <i>in CA</i>	Proclus Arabus <i>In Carmen aureum commentarius</i> (ed. and trans. Linley; see <i>Bibliography</i>)
<i>Pyth. Sent.</i>	<i>Pythagorean Sentences</i> , in Chadwick, <i>Sentences of Sextus</i> , 84–94; see <i>Bibliography</i>
Sextus <i>Sent.</i>	Chadwick, <i>Sentences of Sextus</i> ; see <i>Bibliography</i>
Simplicius	
<i>in Arist. Phys.</i>	<i>In Aristotelis physicorum libros octo commentaria</i> , ed. H. Diels (CAG 9–10; Berlin: Reimer, 1882–95)
<i>in Epict.</i>	<i>Commentarius in Epicteti Enchiridion</i> , ed. Johannes Schweighäuser (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1800)
Stobaeus	Stobaeus <i>Anthologium</i> , ed. Wachsmuth and Hense; see <i>Bibliography</i>
<i>Suda</i>	<i>Suidae Lexicon</i> , ed. Ada Adler (Lexicographi Graeci 1/1–5; 1928–38; reprint, Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967–71)
Theano <i>Ep. Pyth.</i>	see <i>Ep. Pyth.</i>
Theo of Smyrna	
<i>Expos. rer. math.</i>	<i>Expositio rerum mathematicarum</i> , ed. Eduard Hiller (Leipzig: Teubner, 1878)
<i>Theol. ar.</i>	[Iamblichus] <i>Theologumena arithmeticae</i> (ed. Vittorio de Falco; Leipzig: Teubner, 1922)
<i>Vit. Aesop.</i>	<i>Vita et sententiae Aesopi</i> , ed. Ben Edwin Perry (<i>Aesopica: A Series of Texts Relating to Aesop or Ascribed to Him or Closely Connected with the Literary Tradition that Bears His Name 1: Greek and Latin Texts</i> [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952] 35–107)
Xenocrates frg. Heinze	see Heinze in <i>Bibliography</i>

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY OF MODERN RESEARCH

For its size and (as has been thought) relative unimportance, the *Golden Verses* has attracted a fair amount of attention over the past century.¹ Nonetheless, only three scholars have made any significant contribution to our understanding of the poem, namely, August Nauck (1873 and 1884), Armand Delatte (1915), and P. C. van der Horst (1932). Consequently, the history of modern research on the poem may be divided into three periods: (a) before 1870, (b) from 1870 to 1932, and (c) after 1932.²

1 *Scholarship before 1870*

Scholarship on the *Golden Verses* before 1870 focused mainly on the problem of authorship. It would serve no purpose to enter into the details of the arguments offered; what follows is therefore simply a summary of the positions taken.³ The position of Glandorf is the most extreme: he suggests that the *Golden Verses* was composed even before Pythagoras' time and that it had its origin in the Eleusinian mysteries. When we consider other scholars, it is almost a question of *quot homines tot sententiae*. Among the authors suggested for the *Golden Verses* we find Empedocles

¹ Since it is my contention that the *Golden Verses* is a unitary poem and not a mere collection of discrete verses, I will use a singular verb with the poem. The abbreviation *GV* will be used whenever I refer to specific lines of the *Golden Verses*.

² The *Golden Verses* has also been very popular in theosophical circles, and one finds numerous commentaries on the poem as a guide to living wisely. Cf., e.g., Hallie Watters, *The Pythagorean Way of Life with a Discussion of the Golden Verses* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1926); Léonard Saint-Michel, *Pythagore: Les vers d'or* (Brouges: Boin, 1948); Jean Zafiropulo, ΠΥΘΑΓΟΡΟΥ ΧΡΥΣΑ ΕΠΗ (Paris: Tallone, 1949); and more recently, Inge von Wedemeyer, *Die Goldenen Verse des Pythagoras: Lebensregeln zur Meditation* (Heilbronn: Heilbronn, 1983). The scholarly value of such publications is usually negligible.

³ See Johannes Albertus Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Graeca* (4th ed.; ed. Gottlieb Chrisophorus Harles; Hamburg: Bohn, 1790) 1.791–96; F. W. A. Mullach, ed., *Hieroclis in aureum Pythagoreorum carmen commentarius* (Berlin: Geelhaar, 1853) viii–xxii; Giovanni Pesenti, "Pythagorica I: La data dei χρυσὰ ἔπη," *Didaskaleion* 1 (1912) 499–501.

(Fabricius), Phocylides (Windet), Philolaus (Lascaris, Vivès), Epicharmus (Stanley), Lysis (Ménage, Mullach), and Aston (Mullach). According to Meiners, the *Golden Verses* is heavily interpolated and the work of a Pythagorean contemporary of Aristoxenus.

Friedrich Mullach's work on the *Golden Verses* (1853 and 1875) is in many respects a summary of previous scholarship. Besides the question of authorship and date, and an edition of the text, he also gives a Latin translation and a few philological notes.⁴ Still noteworthy and not reflected in subsequent scholarship is an 1857 article by Domenico Capellina on the ancient Pythagorean doctrine contained in the *Golden Verses*.⁵

2 Scholarship between 1870 and 1932

In 1873 August Nauck published an article "Über die goldenen Sprüche des Pythagoras," which he later appended (translated into Latin and somewhat expanded) as an addendum to his edition of Iamblichus *De vita Pythagorica* (1884), entitled "Epimetrum de Pythagorae aureo carmine."⁶ Because of their highly critical nature, these two articles mark a break with the more positive attitude evinced by previous studies and therefore inaugurate modern research on the *Golden Verses*. Nauck regards the *Golden Verses* as a compilation made in the 4th century AD by someone who willfully tried to deceive credulous people by ascribing it to Pythagoras. With this in mind the author used some ancient Pythagorean verses to lend an air of authenticity to his work. Nauck does not have a very high opinion of the work: it is incoherent and in places incomprehensible; many of the precepts are puerile and inane; its style and meter bad. In fact, this poem moves him to nausea.⁷

Apart from his critical edition of the *Golden Verses* in which he

⁴ Mullach, *Hieroclis commentarius*, ix-xxiv, 1-20; reprinted in idem, *Fragmenta philosophorum Graecorum I* (Paris: Ambrosius Firmin Didot, 1875) 193-99, 410-14.

⁵ Domenico Capellina, "Delle dottrine dell' antica scuola pitagorica contenute nei *Versi d'oro*," *Memorie della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino, Classe delle scienze morali, storiche, e filologiche* 2/16 (1857) 37-109.

⁶ August Nauck, "Über die goldenen Sprüche des Pythagoras," *Bulletin de l'Académie des Sciences de Saint-Petersbourg* 18 (1873) 472-501; idem, "Epimetrum de Pythagorae aureo carmine," in *Iamblichi de vita Pythagorica liber* (ed. August Nauck; St. Petersburg: Eggers & Glasunof, 1884; reprint, Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1965) 201-42.

⁷ Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 202, 220.

has laid down the principles still adhered to by present editors, the importance of Nauck's studies lies in the critical and systematic manner in which he approaches the problem of dating the *Golden Verses*. For this he employs both internal and external criteria. Internal evidence indicating a late date is (a) the bad meter, (b) the relatively frequent occurrence of hiatus, (c) the use of forms unknown or unused in the ancient period, (d) the bad style and incoherence of the poem, and (e) the fact that ancient Pythagorean doctrines are misunderstood or contradicted.⁸ As far as external evidence is concerned, Nauck gives an extensive list of testimonia; from his examination of these he concludes that the *Golden Verses* is not mentioned by name before Iamblichus in the 4th century AD.⁹ The fact that earlier authors who quoted verses now occurring in the *Golden Verses* (e.g., Chrysippus, Epictetus, Plutarch, Galen, and Clement of Alexandria) did not refer to the *Golden Verses* by name, makes it very improbable that the poem as such existed before the time of Iamblichus. We should rather think of the *Golden Verses* as a compilation composed of some good, ancient verses, as well as bad verses written by the compiler himself.¹⁰

Nauck complains in his second study (1884) that his article published eleven years earlier in 1873 has been overlooked, but he notes that a few scholars (i.e., Tycho Mommsen, Eduard Zeller, and C. G. Cobet) are moving closer to his own position.¹¹ Mommsen refers to the *Golden Verses* only in passing, and assigns it to the Alexandrian period.¹² According to Zeller, "das kleine Werk selbst ist so farblos und unzusammenhängend, daß es eher wie eine spätere Zusammenstellung von Lebensvorschriften aussieht, die vielleicht zum Teil schon länger in gebundener Form im Umlauf waren." Since there are no traces in the poem of Neoplatonic influence, it cannot be dated as late as Nauck does. Zeller therefore proposes a date in the 1st century BC.¹³

⁸ Ibid., 208-13, 223-24.

⁹ Ibid., 219. Although Nauck refers to the testimonium by Alciphron, he dates the latter after Iamblichus; see *ibid.*, 219 n. 16. The testimonia will be discussed in full in the next chapter.

¹⁰ Ibid., 220-27.

¹¹ Ibid., 202-3.

¹² Tycho Mommsen, *Beiträge zu der Lehre von den griechische Präpositionen* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1895) 182.

¹³ Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (3 vols. in 6 pts.; 4th-7th ed.; Leipzig: Reisland, 1921-23) 1.378 and n. 3; cf. also 3.2.116n.

Cobet devotes a short article in his *Collectanea critica* to the *Golden Verses*, consisting mainly of philological notes to some of the verses.¹⁴ He is very negative about the poem:

Farrago est incondita versuum diversae aetatis et coloris et stili in aliis brevior, auctior in aliis.... Multa ... accesserunt nova et Veteribus inaudita, non minus a sententia Veterum quam a sermone abhorrentia.

[The *Golden Verses*] is a confused hodge-podge of verses, diverse in age, color, and style, too brief in some respects, too lengthy in others. ... Much that is new and unheard of in ancient authors appears in the poem, inconsistent no less in thought than in style with the ancients.¹⁵

Although Cobet does not express any opinion on the date of the *Golden Verses*, in a later article he notes that Galen recited the *Golden Verses* twice a day,¹⁶ which would imply a *terminus ante quem* of the middle of the 2d century AD at the latest.

Theobald Ziegler is of the opinion that the *Golden Verses* originated among the early Pythagoreans, although he thinks it impossible to be as specific as Mullach *cum suis*.¹⁷ Arguments based on the incoherence of the poem are “Geschmacksurteile, die nichts beweisen.” The only indication against an early date is the use of a first aorist (ἀπολείψας) in *GV* 70 instead of a second aorist; this may be rectified by means of an emendation.¹⁸ The poem as such with its popular ethical and religious precepts is meant for exoteric Pythagoreans.¹⁹

Theodor Bergk argues for a date in the time of the Pythagorean Lysis (5th century BC), since he accepts Chrysippus’ citation of *GV* 54 as coming from the *Golden Verses* itself. Many Pythagoreans migrated from Magna Graecia to Greece during this period, and the need arose for the ethical beliefs of the school to be

The quotation was already part of the 2d edition (1856), p. 215. Zeller’s position seems to serve as the basis for the brief notes on the *Golden Verses* in Christ-Schmid-Stählin 2.1.377, and in Friedrich Ueberweg, *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie I* (12th ed.; ed. Karl Praechter; Basel: Schwabe, 1926) 518.

¹⁴ C. G. Cobet, *Collectanea critica: Observationes criticae in scriptores Graecos* (Leiden: Brill, 1878) 460–69.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 461. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁶ C. G. Cobet, “Ad Galenum,” *Mnemosyne* n.s. 8 (1880) 233–45, esp. 240–41.

¹⁷ Theobald Ziegler, *Geschichte der Ethik 1: Die Ethik der Griechen und Römer* (Bonn: Strauß, 1881) 26–31.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27, 256 n. 51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29–30.

briefly summarized.²⁰

Giovanni Pesenti also takes issue with Nauck's late dating. The fact that the title was not used before Iamblichus does not prove that the poem as such did not exist; it could easily have circulated under a simpler title like Πυθαγόρου ἔπη or something similar. Having studied the way Plutarch, Galen, and Clement of Alexandria refer to the verses they quote, Pesenti concludes that there existed in the 2d century AD, or even in the second half of the 1st century, a pseudo-Pythagorean collection very similar to the *Golden Verses* under the title Πυθαγόρου ὑποθήκαι or παραγγέλματα or παραινέσεις.²¹ In 1913 the same author publishes a selection of Pythagorean texts translated into Italian, including the *Golden Verses*.²²

The next major study of the *Golden Verses* after Nauck is the Belgian scholar Armand Delatte's "Un hieros logos pythagoricien," one of the articles published in his important work *Études sur la littérature pythagoricienne*, which appeared in 1915.²³ Delatte discusses the *Golden Verses* itself in relative detail in the latter half of his article.²⁴ His overall view of the *Golden Verses* does not differ much from that of Nauck. He too emphasizes the prosaic, vulgar nature of the work and its absolute lack of organization, all of which indicate a compilation. He also accepts Nauck's arguments concerning the date, but thinks that Athenaeus might already have known the poem; it should in any case not be dated later than the middle of the 3d century AD.²⁵ Delatte's main concern is not with the *Golden Verses* itself, however, but with the early Pythagorean verses which the author used in his compilation. Delatte believes many of these verses formed part of a Ἱερὸς λόγος (*Sacred Discourse*) in Ionic hexameters which dated from the 5th century BC.²⁶ By way of source criticism Delatte tries to reconstruct the Ἱερὸς λόγος and this is his main reason for studying the *Golden Verses*. Delatte's theory concerning the

²⁰ Theodor Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte 2* (ed. Gustav Hinrichs; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1883) 442–43.

²¹ Pesenti, "Pythagorica," 499–509.

²² Giovanni Pesenti, trans., *Ps. Pitagora: I versi aurei, i simboli, le lettere* (Cultura dell'anima 34; Lanciano: Carabba, 1913).

²³ Armand Delatte, *Études sur la littérature pythagoricienne* (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études 217; Paris: Champion, 1915) 3–79.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 45–79.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 45–46.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 29–32.

Ἱερὸς λόγος and its relation to the *Golden Verses* has won some acceptance, although the details are still very much in dispute.²⁷

The first modern scholar to devote a complete monograph to the *Golden Verses* is P. C. van der Horst with his 1932 Leiden dissertation entitled *Les vers d'or pythagoriciens*.²⁸ In this work van der Horst gives a new critical edition as well as a commentary of the *Golden Verses*. Although van der Horst agrees with Delatte's view that the *Golden Verses* contains many verses from the early Pythagorean period,²⁹ he differs in a very important respect from Delatte and Nauck: he is the first scholar in recent years to argue for the basic coherence and unity of the poem.³⁰ In his view the older and newer verses in the *Golden Verses* may differ aesthetically, but they do not differ in doctrine. The Pythagorean tradition seems to have remained the same from the time of the early Pythagoreans up to the date of the *Golden Verses*.³¹ Because of the similarities between the Hermetic *Poimandres* and the *Golden Verses*, on the one hand, and the reverent attitude of Hierocles towards the poem, on the other, the latter cannot be later than the 2d century AD.³² Van der Horst's recognition of the basic coherence of the *Golden Verses*, as well as the comparative material he adduces, is a very important contribution to our understanding of the poem. His dissertation therefore remains a basic text for research on the *Golden Verses*.

²⁷ Delatte's reconstruction is accepted by B. L. van der Waerden ("Pythagoras," PWSup 10 (1965) 850–52; *Die Pythagoreer: Religiöse Bruderschaft und Schule der Wissenschaft* [Bibliothek der Alten Welt; Zurich: Artemis, 1979] 152–54) and C. J. de Vogel (*Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism: An Interpretation of Neglected Evidence on the Philosopher Pythagoras* [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1966] 11–12). Skepticism about the contents and early date of such a poem is expressed by Willy Theiler (review of *Études sur la littérature pythagoricienne*, by Armand Delatte, *Gnomon* 2 [1926] 147–48), Holger Thesleff (*An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* [Acta Academiae Aboensis, Humaniora 24/3; Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1961] 18–19, 107; *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period* [Acta Academiae Aboensis, Ser. A, Humaniora 30/1; Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1965] 163 n. 9; "The Pythagoreans in the Light and Shadows of Recent Research," in *Mysticism: Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Mysticism Held at Åbo on the 7th–9th September 1968* [ed. Sven S. Hartman and Carl-Martin Edsman; Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis 5; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1970] 89), and Walter Burkert (*Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* [trans. Edwin L. Minar, Jr.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972] 219–20).

²⁸ P. C. van der Horst, *Les vers d'or pythagoriciens* (Leiden: Brill, 1932).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, xxv–xxix.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, xxix–xxxii.

³¹ *Ibid.*, xxxii–xxxiii.

³² *Ibid.*, xxxvii.

However, it still has a number of shortcomings: (a) it has only a very superficial analysis of the composition of the *Golden Verses*; (b) very little attention is paid to its genre and function; (c) the development of the Pythagorean tradition is all but ignored; and (d) not enough consideration is given to other Hellenistic philosophical and religious traditions.

3 *Scholarship after 1932*

Subsequent scholarship all depends to a great extent on Nauck, Delatte, and van der Horst. Georges Méautis' *Le livre de la sagesse pythagoricienne* appeared in 1938. This contains a very useful French translation of the *Golden Verses* and a brief commentary.³³ In the same year E. G. Pantelakes publishes a study on the *Golden Verses*.³⁴ It consists of an introduction to Pythagoreanism, a text (based on van der Horst's), a translation of the *Golden Verses* into modern Greek, and a commentary.

Two Italian publications follow: J. Èvola's *I versi d'oro pitagorei* and Antonio Farina's *I versi aurei di Pitagora*.³⁵ The first contains a translation with commentary which includes comparisons with Buddhism; the second a critical text, translation and selected testimonia. Èvola wants to date the poem around the 2d century BC, while Farina thinks it dates back to Pythagoras himself, or perhaps to one of his disciples, since he does not find sufficient reason to reject "the tradition."³⁶

The Finnish scholar Holger Thesleff in his *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* (1961) divides the Pythagorean pseudepigrapha, which flourished in the Hellenistic period, into two groups: Class I contains writings attributed to Pythagoras or members of his family; they are mainly in Attic *koine* or Ionic prose or hexameters, and are characterized by an interest in mysticism and in Pythagoras himself. Class II consists

³³ Georges Méautis, *Le livre de la sagesse pythagoricienne* (Paris: Dorbon-Ainé, 1938).

³⁴ E. G. Pantelakes, ΠΥΘΑΓΟΡΟΣ ΧΡΤΣΑ ΕΠΗ (Bibliothèque Papyrou 25; Athens: Papyros, 1938).

³⁵ J. Èvola, *I versi d'oro pitagorei* (Rome: Atanòr, 1959); Antonio Farina, ed. and trans., *I versi aurei di Pitagora: Introduzione, testo critico, testimonianze, traduzione, commento* (Collana di studi greci 35; Naples: Libreria scientifica editrice, 1962).

³⁶ Èvola, *Versi d'oro*, 6; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 12-17. Italian scholars in general evince a "more trustful spirit" as regards the Pythagorean tradition, the "Italian philosophy" par excellence; cf. Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 6-7.

of writings attributed to various other Pythagoreans or unknown authors; they are in Doric prose and exhibit no interest in either mysticism or Pythagoras.³⁷ Thesleff argues that the majority of the writings in Class II originated in Southern Italy around the middle of the 3d century BC. Class I writings, on the other hand, derive from the East: "Alexandria, Athens or elsewhere."³⁸ The *Golden Verses* belongs to this last group. Thesleff agrees with Delatte that the *Golden Verses* may be based on a ἱερὸς λόγος and suggests a date in the 3d or 2d century BC.³⁹ Thesleff's reconstruction of the historical development of the Pseudopythagorica remains highly conjectural, as he himself admits.⁴⁰ In Thesleff's collection of the Hellenistic Pseudopythagorica (1965), the *Golden Verses* is included among the fragments of a Pythagorean ἱερὸς λόγος in hexameter. In this respect Thesleff follows Delatte, although he excludes many other verses Delatte assigns to the ἱερὸς λόγος.⁴¹

B. L. van der Waerden agrees with Delatte's view of the ἱερὸς λόγος and its relation to the *Golden Verses*.⁴² The close connection between the two is in fact evidence for the continuity of the Pythagorean tradition into the Hellenistic and early Imperial period, "zumal es sich hier nicht um theoretische Lehren, sondern um praktische Lebensregeln und Glaubenskräfte handelt. Lebensregeln werden im allgemeinen nur dann tradiert, wenn sie auch praktiziert werden."⁴³ In his recent book, *Die Pythagoreer: Religiöse Bruderschaft und Schule der Wissenschaft* (1979), van der Waerden devotes a chapter to the *Golden Verses*, which includes a translation into German by H. Schmitz, and a brief commentary.⁴⁴ Here van der Waerden basically follows the lines laid down by

³⁷ Thesleff, *Introduction*, 27–29, 71–77, 99–100.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 99–100.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 107, 113.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 113. See also Holger Thesleff, "On the Problem of the Doric Pseudo-Pythagorica: An Alternative Theory of Date and Purpose," in *Pseudepigrapha I: Pseudopythagorica, lettres de Platon, littérature pseudépigraphique juive* (Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 18; Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1972) 59–60 (in which he concedes many of Burkert's arguments against an early Hellenistic dating for the Doric Pseudopythagorica); Walter Burkert, review of *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period*, by Holger Thesleff, *Gnomon* 34 (1962) 763–68; idem, "Zur geistesgeschichtlichen Einordnung einiger Pseudopythagorica," in *Pseudepigrapha I*, 25–55.

⁴¹ Thesleff, *Pythagorean Texts*, 158–163, esp. 163 n. 9; see also n. 27 above.

⁴² Van der Waerden, "Pythagoras," 851–52.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 852.

⁴⁴ Van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, chap. 6.

Delatte and van der Horst.

In a stimulating article published in 1971 Myrto Dragona-Monachou points out similarities between the *Golden Verses* and Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*.⁴⁵ He argues against direct literary dependence and concludes that both are using a Pythagorean-Orphic *Ἱερὸς λόγος* as source.

Recently, Yvan Gobry has included a text of the *Golden Verses* with a French translation and brief notes in his book on Pythagoras. He depends mainly on Hierocles and Delatte in his notes—there is no reference to van der Horst or any other subsequent scholar.⁴⁶

We should also note two recent authors that have in passing made important observations pertaining to the genre and function of the *Golden Verses*. Max Küchler briefly discusses the *Golden Verses* within the framework of Greek gnomologia.⁴⁷ This very obvious aspect of the *Golden Verses* has been all but ignored by previous scholars. The second observation is by Ilsetraut Hadot, who notes that the *Golden Verses* was used by the spiritual guide of Late Antiquity as a *propaedeuticum* to prepare students for philosophy and as an instrument to be used in their spiritual exercises.⁴⁸ This practice of *psychagogy* is of the greatest importance for a correct understanding of the *Golden Verses*.

Besides the translations of the *Golden Verses* already mentioned, I refer briefly to a few others to have appeared in this century: Translations of the *Golden Verses* and other Pythagorean texts into English are published in 1920 by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie.⁴⁹ His translation of the *Golden Verses* takes too many

⁴⁵ Myrto Dragona-Monachou, "Ὁ 'Ἱμνος στὸ Δία' καὶ τὰ Χρυσᾶ ἔπη: Ἡ ποιητικὴ θεολογία τοῦ Κλεάνθου καὶ ἡ ὀρφικο-πυθαγορικὴ παράδοση," *Philosophia* 1 (1971) 339–78.

⁴⁶ Yvan Gobry, *Pythagore* (Les grandes leçons de philosophie; Paris: Éditions Universitaires, 1992) 100–21.

⁴⁷ Max Küchler, *Frühjüdische Weisheitstraditionen: Zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens* (OBO 26; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979) 240–58, esp. 251–52; cf. also pp. 271–72.

⁴⁸ I. Hadot, "The Spiritual Guide," trans. Margaret Kirby, in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman* (ed. A. H. Armstrong; World Spirituality 15; New York: Crossroad, 1986) 436–59, esp. 451, 454.

⁴⁹ Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, comp. and trans., *Pythagorean Library: A Complete Collection of Surviving Works of Pythagoreans* (Alpine, N.J.: Platonist Press, 1920). This has been reprinted recently with some revisions and additions as *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library: An Anthology of Ancient Writings Which Relate to Pythagoras and Pythagorean Philosophy* (comp. and trans. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, with additional translations by Thomas Taylor and Arthur Fairbanks, introd. and ed. David R. Fideler, with a foreword by Joscelyn Godwin; Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1987).

liberties with the Greek text to be reliable. Partial translations of the *Golden Verses* have been published by J. A. Schröder and by Philip Wheelwright. The former's translation (into Dutch) is excellent, but the latter at times completely misrepresents the text.⁵⁰ I have also recently published an Afrikaans translation of the *Golden Verses* with a brief introduction.⁵¹

Our survey of recent scholarship on the *Golden Verses* has indicated some of the areas that need more discussion. These will be dealt with as follows in the next chapters: A survey of the ancient reception and transmission of the poem in chapters 2 and 3 will be followed by a discussion of the authorship of the *Golden Verses* in chapter 4 and the date in chapter 5. In the latter I shall argue for an earlier dating of the poem than that proposed by Nauck, Delatte, and van der Horst. The next chapter will give a survey of the poem's composition and main themes. In chapter 7 the genre and function of the poem will receive attention; here the function of the poem as an introduction to, and summary of the basic tenets of a Pythagorean sect will be stressed. Finally, in chapter 8, an attempt will be made to locate the *Golden Verses* within the wider historical, philosophical, and religious context.

⁵⁰ J. A. Schröder, "Nobele geest," *Hermeneus* 27 (1956) 84–87, 105–7; Philip Wheelwright, ed. and trans., *The Presocratics* (New York: Odyssey, 1966) 228–30.

⁵¹ J. C. Thom, "Die Goue Verse van Puthagoras," *Akroterion* 35 (1990) 107–17.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF RECEPTION IN ANTIQUITY

1 *Ancient Testimonia*

The roughly forty testimonia (including four ancient commentaries) indicate that the *Golden Verses* was known to a wide range of authors from late antiquity, including Plutarch, Epictetus, Galen, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, Calcidius, Stobaeus, Proclus, Simplicius, and other Neoplatonists. These testimonia not only provide evidence for the probable date of the poem, they are also invaluable as indications of the context in which the *Golden Verses* functioned, of its authorship and genre, of the interpretations of specific terms and passages, and indeed also of the composition of the poem.¹ It is clear from the testimonia that the *Golden Verses* was highly regarded in late antiquity as a concise formulation of the principles of the philosophical life. The Neoplatonists, starting with Iamblichus, probably all used the poem as a propaedeutic moral instruction preparing the way for philosophy proper. Earlier authors, from Plutarch onwards, also prized the moral value of the poem; for them too, the poem was an instrument to be used to strengthen and reinforce moral conviction.

The testimonia may be divided into two general categories, namely, (a) those citing the *Golden Verses* by name or quoting verses from the poem, and (b) those containing probable allusions to the *Golden Verses*. In the former category, the most important testimonia, in chronological order, are the following (the verses quoted or alluded to are indicated in square brackets):

Chrysippus (281/77–208/04 BC) *SVF* 2.1000 [GV 54]; Plutarch (ca. AD 45–120) *Consol. ad Apoll.* 29.116e [GV 17–18], *De superst.* 7.168b [GV 42], *De curios.* 1.515f [GV 42], frg. 86 Sandbach [GV 7–8];

¹ Previous scholarship has used the testimonia almost exclusively to determine the date of the *Golden Verses*. Cf. esp. Nauck, “Über die goldenen Sprüche”; idem, “De aureo carmine”; Pesenti, “Pythagorica,” 499–509.

[Plutarch] *Vit. Hom.* 153 [GV 17–18]; Epictetus (ca. AD 55–135) ap. Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 3.10.2–3 [GV 40–44], 4.6.32–35 [GV 40, 42]; Galen (AD 129–99) *Affect. dignot.* 5.10 [GV 12]; Theano *Ep. Pyth.* 7.5 (2d century AD?) [GV 38]; Alciphron (2d/3d century AD) 3.19.7 [GV title]; Clement of Alexandria (AD 150–ca. 215) *Paed.* 1.10.94.1 [GV 44]; Origen (AD 185–253) frg. in *Ps.* 4:5 [GV 42]; Porphyry (AD 234–301/4) *VP* 40 [GV 40–42]; Iamblichus (ca. AD 240–325) *VP* 144 [GV 1–2], *Protr.* 3, pp. 10–16 [GV 45–71]; Iamblichus Arabus in *CA* [GV 1–71]; Diogenes Laertius (end 3d century AD?) 8.22 [GV 42]; Ausonius (AD 310–94) 363.14–26 [GV 40–44]; Themistius (AD ca. 317–88) *Or.* 13.175a [GV 42]; Gregory of Nazianzus (AD 329/30–390/91) *Or.* 4.102.6–7 [GV title]; Jerome (AD 345–419) *c. Rufin.* 3.39.27–32 [GV title]; Proclus Arab. in *CA* (second half of 4th century AD?) [GV 1–71]; Calcidius (fl. ca. AD 400) in *Tim.* 136 [GV 70–71]; Hierocles (early 5th century AD) in *CA* [GV 1–71]; Stobaeus (early 5th century AD) 3.1.11 [GV 9–16], 3.3.21 [GV 21–26, 39], 3.15.7 [GV 37–38], 3.24.2 [GV 12], 4.25.11 [GV 4], 4.37.1 [GV 32–35], 4.44.17 [GV 17–18]; Proclus (AD 412–85) in *Tim.* 1.203.24–27 [GV 1–2], 3.53.5–7 [GV 47–48]; Ammonius (fl. ca. AD 550) in *Porph.*, pp. 15.17–16.3 [GV 9–10, 40–44]; Simplicius (early 6th century AD) in *Epict.* 2, p. 85 [GV 60]; 30, p. 328 [GV 7–8]; Elias (6th century AD) in *Porph.* 12, p. 34.10–12, 16–21 [GV 12, 40–42, 44]; David (6th century AD) *Proll.* 8, p. 26.6–8 [GV title]; 15, p. 48.24–28 [GV 47–48]; Hesychius (6th century AD) ap. *Suda* s.v. Πρόκλος (II 2472) [GV title]; Arethas (ca. AD 860–940) *Scripta min.* 40.2–4 [GV 7]; *Suda* (10th century AD) s.v. Πυθαγόρας (II 3120) [GV title].

The following testimonia contain probable allusions to the *Golden Verses*:

Cato the Elder (d. 149 BC) ap. Cicero (106–43 BC) *Sen.* 38 [GV 40–44]; Seneca (5 BC–AD 65) *Dial.* 5.36.1–4 [GV 40–44]; Galen *Affect. dignot.* 6.10 [GV 40–44 or whole poem]; Methodius (early 4th century AD) *Symp.* 6.5.147 [GV 47].

In addition, there are numerous citations of, and allusions to the Pythagorean oath on which GV 47–48a are based.² However, since the form in the *Golden Verses* is derived from this earlier, independent oath, these citations cannot be considered testimonia

² See Aëtius 1.3.8; [Plutarch] *Placita* 877a; Theo of Smyrna *Expos. rer. math.*, p. 94.6–7; Lucian *Vit. auct.* 4; Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 4.2, 4.9, 7.94; Hippolytus *Haer.* 6.23.4, 1.2.9, 4.51.7, 6.34.1; Porphyry *VP* 20; Iamblichus *VP* 150, 162; *Theol. ar.* 18, p. 22.21–22; Methodius *Symp.* 6.5.147; Julian *Or.* 9.196c, p. 164; Macrobius in *Sonn. Scip.* 1.6.41; Stobaeus 1.10.12; Proclus in *Tim.* 1.16.31–17.1.

of the *Golden Verses* itself.

Chronologically the testimonia cover a wide time span, starting with Chrysippus in the 3d century BC and continuing until well into the Byzantine period. The first reference to the *Golden Verses* by name, however, is by Alciphron (3.19.7), who is probably to be dated not later than the first decade of the 3d century AD,³ followed by Iamblichus (*Protr.* 3, p. 10.18), who was active in the second half of the 3d and the beginning of the 4th century.⁴ From this time onward, the poem's name was more commonly used in citations (cf. Gregory of Nazianzus *Or.* 4.102.6–7; Jerome *c. Rufin.* 3.39.27–28; Calcidius *in Tim.* 136; Hierocles *in CA*, passim; Stobaeus 3.3.21, 4.25.11; Proclus *in Tim.* 3.53.5; Simplicius *in Epict.* 2, p. 85; etc.). Before Alciphron the verses quoted were simply cited as something said by Pythagoras or the Pythagoreans.⁵ This fact seriously complicates the problem of dating the *Golden Verses*, which will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

The testimonia indicate that the authorship of the poem was already problematical in antiquity. Though some witnesses do attribute the *Golden Verses* to Pythagoras (cf. Calcidius *in Tim.* 136; Stobaeus 3.3.21, 4.25.11; Elias *in Porph.* 12, p. 34), others are explicit in their denial of this attribution because of the well-known tradition that Pythagoras himself left no writings.⁶ David

³ Although Alciphron is usually considered a younger contemporary and imitator of Lucian, firm evidence as to his date has been lacking. Recently Barry Baldwin has offered what appears to be a cogent argument for the date given above ("The Date of Alciphron," *Hermes* 110 [1982] 253–54). Cf. also W. Schmid, "Alkiphron," *PW* 1 (1894) 1548–49; Christ-Schmid-Stählin 2.2.826 (Alciphron a younger contemporary of Lucian); Ernst Milobenski, "Alkiphron," *Kl. Pauly* 1.267 (2d century AD). For a full discussion of the problem see Fobes' introduction to the Loeb edition of Alciphron (*The Letters of Alciphron, Aelian and Philostratus* [trans. Allen Rogers Benner and Francis H. Fobes; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949] 6–18).

⁴ Iamblichus' precise dates are a matter of conjecture, but scholarly consensus has now settled on a birth date of ca. 240 and a death of ca. 325; cf. John Dillon, "Iamblichus of Chalcis (c. 240–325 A.D.)," *ANRW* II.36.2 (1987) 865–66.

⁵ Cf. Chrysippus *SVF* 2.1000, p. 294.25: Διὸ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Πυθαγορεῶν εἴρηται [GV 54]; Plutarch *Consol. ad Apoll.* 29.116e: καλῶς δ' οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι παρεκελεύσαντο λέγοντες [GV 17–18]; [Plutarch] *Vit. Hom.* 153: παρὰ τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τὸ Πυθαγορικόν [GV 17–18]; Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 4.6.32–35: τὸ τοῦ Πυθαγόρου [GV 40, 42]; Galen *Affect. dignot.* 6.10: ταῦτας δὴ τὰς φερομένας ὡς Πυθαγόρου παραινέσεις [GV 40–44?]; Clement of Alexandria *Paed.* 1.10.94.1: καὶ μοι δοκεῖ συνεῖς τοῦτο ὁ Σάμιος παραγγέλλειν Πυθαγόρας [GV 44].

⁶ For this tradition, cf. DK 14.17–19; Diogenes Laertius 1.16; Plutarch *Numa* 22; Nicomachus ap. Porphyry *VP* 57. See also Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 1.368 n. 2; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 218–19.

cites this tradition and adds that some Pythagorean wrote the poem in Pythagoras' name to honor the latter (*Proll.* 8, p. 26.6–8). Jerome is also aware of this tradition, but he sidesteps the problem by asserting that the doctrines contained in the *Golden Verses* originated with Pythagoras, even if we cannot prove that he himself actually wrote anything (c. *Rufin.* 3.39.27–28, 3.40.27–34). According to the *Suda*, “some also attribute the *Golden Verses* to him (sc. Pythagoras).”⁷ Others attribute the poem to the Pythagoreans in general (cf. Iamblichus *Protr.* 3, p. 10; Gregory of Nazianzus *Or.* 4.102.6–7; Hierocles in *CA* 27.11) or refer vaguely to “the father” or “the poet” of the *Golden Verses* (Proclus in *Tim.* 3.53.5; Simplicius in *Epict.* 2, p. 85). Even after Alciphron individual verses are still cited without reference to the title of the poem; such verses are attributed mostly to Pythagoras, less often to the Pythagoreans in general (cf. Origen frg. in *Ps.* 4:5; Porphyry *VP* 40; Iamblichus *VP* 144; Diogenes Laertius 8.22; Ausonius 363.14–26; Proclus in *Tim.* 1.203.26). Eustratius (ca. AD 1060–1120) attributes *GV* 42 to Phocylides (in *EN*, p. 2.10), but this merits no serious consideration.

On the whole all references to the *Golden Verses* or to verses occurring in it give evidence of a very positive attitude toward the poem. This attitude is best represented by Hierocles of Alexandria who states at the end of his commentary on the *Golden Verses*:

ἔστι ... οὐδὲν ἄλλο τὰ ἔπη ταῦτα ἢ τελειότατος χαρακτήρ φιλοσοφίας καὶ τῶν κεφαλαιωδεστέρων αὐτῆς δογμάτων ἐπιτομὴ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἡδὴ τὴν θεῖαν οἶμον ἀναβεβηκότων ἀπογραφεῖσα τοῖς μετ' αὐτοὺς παιδευτικῇ στοιχειώσεως, ἃ δὴ καὶ τῷ ὄντι εἴποις ἂν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης εὐγενείας εἶναι γνῶρισμα κάλλιστον καὶ οὐχ ἑνός τινος τῶν Πυθαγορείων ἀπομνημόνευμα, ὅλου δὲ τοῦ ἱεροῦ συλλόγου καί, ὡς ἂν αὐτοὶ εἴποιεν, τοῦ ὁμαίου παντὸς ἀπόφθεγμα κοινόν.

These verses are ... nothing but the most complete expression of philosophy, a summary of its more important doctrines, an elementary teaching written down by those who have already advanced on the divine way for those coming after. One may indeed also truly call it the most beautiful token of human nobility and a memorial of not one specific Pythagorean, but of the whole saintly assembly, and as they themselves

⁷ *Suda*, s.v. Πυθαγόρας, p. 263.2: συνέγραψε δὲ ὁ Πυθαγόρας μόνα τρία βιβλία, Παιδευτικόν, Πολιτικόν· τὸ δὲ φερόμενον τρίτον ὡς Πυθαγόρου Λύσιδος ἔστι τοῦ Ταραντίνου ... τινὲς δὲ ἀνατιθέασιν αὐτῷ καὶ τὰ Χρυσᾶ ἔπη. It is not quite clear from the context whether αὐτῷ refers to Pythagoras or to Lysis.

would say, a joint apothegm of the school as a whole. (Hierocles *in CA* 27.11)

Not all witnesses are as positive in their evaluation of the *Golden Verses*, however. Gregory of Nazianzus suggests caustically that it should have been called the 'Leaden Verses' (*Or.* 4.102.6–7). He remains an exception even among Christian authors.

2 *Ancient Commentaries*

There are four extant commentaries on the poem, by Iamblichus, by Hierocles of Alexandria, and two extant in Arabic only, one attributed to Iamblichus, and another to a certain 'Proclus.'

2.1 *Iamblichus of Chalcis*

Iamblichus of Chalcis (ca. AD 240–325) devotes the third chapter of his *Protrepticus* (about six pages in the Teubner edition) to the *Golden Verses*.⁸ This work by Iamblichus is the second book of a multivolume work entitled *On Pythagoreanism* (*Περὶ τῆς Πυθαγορικῆς αἰδέσεως*), in which Iamblichus lays out the basic elements of his Pythagoreanizing philosophical program.⁹ *On Pythagoreanism*, and therefore also the *Protrepticus*, can unfortunately not be dated with any precision.¹⁰ The *Protrepticus* contains a progressive protreptic

accomplished ... in three stages: a protreptic to philosophy in general, not restricted to a specific system (chapters 2–3); an intermediate protreptic mixing in the general with the Pythagorean (chapters 4–20); a final protreptic to the technical demonstrations of the Pythagoreans (chapter 21).¹¹

⁸ *Iamblichi Protrepticus ad fidem codicis Florentini* (ed. Hermenegildus Pistelli; BT; Leipzig, 1888; reprint, Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967) 10–16. According to the *Suda* Iamblichus *floruit* in the reign of Constantine, which lead to the traditional fixing of his birth date between AD 265 and 280. Recent scholarship has pushed back this date considerably, however. See n. 4 above.

⁹ See Dominic J. O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989). O'Meara gives an extensive discussion of Iamblichus' *On Pythagoreanism* (pp. 30–105).

¹⁰ "Any attempt to arrange the works of Iamblichus in definite chronological order at the present stage of research is rash in the extreme, and the same may be said of any attempt to trace his philosophical development" (Dillon, "Iamblichus of Chalcis," 875). O'Meara is of the opinion that *On Pythagoreanism* should not be dated in the early part of Iamblichus' career (*Pythagoras Revived*, 30).

¹¹ O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*, 40–44; quotation from p. 41.

It is significant that the *Golden Verses* is used to illustrate the first stage, which implies that Iamblichus considered the poem a suitable text for novices and uninitiated readers. By way of contrast, the more enigmatic and esoteric Pythagorean sayings known as *σύμβολα* or *ἀκούσματα* are used in the final stage of protreptic.

Iamblichus does not discuss the whole poem, but only the final section, namely, *GV* 45–71 (with the exception of *GV* 47–49a, 57, and 64–68), as an example of protreptic writings making use of *γνώμαι*. These verses are treated as eight lemmata (*GV* 45–46, 49b–53, 54–55a, 55b–56, 58, 59–60, 61–63, and 69–71), each lemma being followed by a short paraphrase. The paraphrases have, as can be expected, a decidedly Neoplatonic flavor, but are not for that reason without value, since a number of his interpretations may have been possible in an earlier period as well. On the basis of his division of the virtues into seven grades—natural, ethical, civic, purificatory, theoretical, paradigmatic, and hieratic—Iamblichus considers *GV* 49–71 an example of theoretical philosophy (*θεωρητική φιλοσοφία*, *Protr.* 3, p. 11.13–14). Theoretical virtues

are the virtues of the soul which has already abandoned itself and turned to what is above it. These are the converse of the ‘civic’ virtues, inasmuch as the latter concern the reason in so far as it directs itself towards what is inferior to it, whereas the former are concerned with the reason’s striving towards what is superior to it.¹²

From this one can probably infer that he would consider the first part of the poem ‘civic.’

Another commentary on the *Golden Verses*, only extant in Arabic and preserved in one manuscript from AD 1278–79, which is presently part of the Garrett collection at Princeton (MS Garrett 308, ff. 303^v–308^v), is also attributed to Iamblichus. This manuscript is unfortunately incomplete; due to the loss of a page, the commentary ends at *GV* 65. Fortunately, a copy from AD 1662 is preserved of this manuscript, at present in a library in Qum, Iran (Kitābhāna-i Mar‘ašī, unnumbered MS, pp. 616–24);¹³ this copy still contains the missing page. A first edition with German trans-

¹² Dillon, “Iamblichus of Chalcis,” 903.

¹³ See Gerhard Endress, ed. and trans., *Proclus Arabus* (Beiruter Texte und Studien 10; Beirut, 1973) 27.

lation by Hans Daiber of this commentary is in the press.¹⁴

The commentary consists of lemmata with interpretation, which, as in the case of the *Protrepticus*, has a Neoplatonic base. However, the same passages are interpreted quite differently in the *Protrepticus* and in the Arabic commentary. How plausible, therefore, is the attribution of the latter to Iamblichus? What evidence do we have of the existence of a commentary by Iamblichus on the *Golden Verses*? There is indeed an ambiguous reference in Jerome to a commentary by Iamblichus:

Cuius sunt enim illa χρυσᾶ παραγγέλματα? nonne Pythagorae? In quibus omnia eius breuiter dogmata continentur et in quae latissimo opere philosophus commentatus est Iamblichus, imitatus ex parte Moderatus, uirum eloquentissimum, et Archippum ac Lysidem, Pythagorae auditores.

By whom then, are those *Golden Precepts*? Surely by Pythagoras? All his doctrines are briefly contained in them, and the philosopher Iamblichus devoted an extensive commentary to them, partially imitating Moderatus, a most eloquent man, as well as Archippus and Lysis, disciples of Pythagoras. (Jerome *c. Rufin.* 3.39.27–32)

Eduard Zeller interprets this statement as evidence for a commentary by Iamblichus on the *Golden Verses*;¹⁵ Bent Dalsgaard Larsen, on the other hand, following Fabricius and Migne, sees in χρυσᾶ παραγγέλματα a reference to the Pythagorean ἀκούσματα or σύμβολα. The commentary cited is thus a lost work by Iamblichus Περὶ συμβόλων.¹⁶ It is to be doubted, however, whether the phrase χρυσᾶ παραγγέλματα per se could be understood as a reference to the *akousmata*; the *Golden Verses* as denotatum would be much more natural. On the other hand, I would agree

¹⁴ Hans Daiber, "Iamblichus' verlorener Kommentar zu den pythagoräischen Goldenen Versen in arabischer Überlieferung," *ANRW* II.36 (forthcoming). I am indebted to Professor Daiber for kindly providing me with a pre-publication copy of his article. Citations of this article are to the page numbers of the typewritten manuscript.

¹⁵ Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 3.2.739 n. 1. Theodor Bergk goes one step further; he considers the passage a testimony for a commentary by Moderatus (*Griechische Literaturgeschichte* 2.443 n. 95).

¹⁶ Bent Dalsgaard Larsen, *Jamblique de Chalcis: Exégète et philosophe* (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1972) 60–61. He cites Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Graeca* (Hamburg, 1708–28) 4.292, and Migne (on Jerome *c. Rufin.* 3.39), who think Jerome refers to Iamblichus' discussion of the *akousmata* in *Protr.* 21. Dalsgaard Larsen disagrees; one chapter cannot be described as "an extensive commentary." He himself suggests the work on the *akousmata* Iamblichus cites in *VP* 186 and in *Protr.* 21, p. 112.2.

that we should not read this passage of Jerome as evidence for a commentary on the *Golden Verses*; neither the chapter in the *Protrepticus*, nor the Arabic commentary could be described as an “extensive commentary” (*latissimo opere*). We also have no evidence of commentaries on the *Golden Verses* by Moderatus (ca. AD 100) or by Archippus and Lysis (5th century BC) that Iamblichus could have used as models. It is far more natural to see in *latissimo opere* a reference to Iamblichus’ multivolume work *On Pythagoreanism*—or part of it, such as the *De vita Pythagorica*—in which he perhaps did make use of Moderatus.¹⁷

There is therefore no evidence in the Greek tradition for a commentary by Iamblichus on the *Golden Verses*. On the other hand, there does indeed appear to be a reference to such a commentary in the Arabic bibliography *Fihrist* compiled by al-Nadīm in AD 987:

He [sc. Pythagoras] wrote epistles known as *The Golden*, which were called by this name because *Galen* wrote them with gold so as to glorify and ennoble them.... The epistles have come down with the commentary of [Iamblichus].¹⁸

Daiber argues that the internal evidence strongly supports an attri-

¹⁷ Very little is known of Moderatus’ life and work. A work on the ideas of the Pythagoreans in eleven books is cited by Porphyry (VP 48); Iamblichus may also have used it. See on Moderatus, John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) 344–51. Moderatus was indeed used as source by Porphyry for his *De vita Pythagorae*; see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 99, 101. The interpretational crux of the Jerome passage lies in the respective antecedents of *in quibus* and *in quae*. The natural reading (with *et* joining them) would be for them to have the same antecedent, viz., *illa χρυσᾷ παραγγέλματα*. However, this gives rise to the improbable interpretation followed by Zeller and Bergk. A different reading would be to take *dogmata* as antecedent of *in quae*, in which case *latissimum opus* naturally refers to Iamblichus’ *Ἐνναγωγὴ τῶν Πυθαγορείων δογμάτων* (i.e., the multivolume work *On Pythagoreanism*). To facilitate the latter reading, it may be advisable to delete the *et* from Jerome’s text. (The recent translation by Pierre Lardet retains the ambiguity: “De qui en effet sont les fameux *préceptes d’or*? de Pythagore, n’est-ce pas? Toutes ses doctrines s’y trouvent en abrégé, et le philosophe Jamblique leur a consacré un commentaire fort étendu, où il imite pour une part le très éloquent Moderatus, ainsi qu’Archippe et Lysis, disciples de Pythagore” [*Saint Jérôme: Apologie contre Rufin* (SC 303; Paris: Cerf, 1983) 315].)

¹⁸ Bayard Dodge, ed. and trans., *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture* (2 vols.; Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies 83; New York: Columbia University Press, 1970) 2.590. Dodge has “Malchus” instead of “Iamblichus,” but this is a mistranslation (Daiber, “Iamblichus’ Kommentar,” [2] n. 13). For an identification of the “epistles known as *The Golden*” with the *Golden Verses*, see Franz Rosenthal, *Das Fortleben der Antike im Islam* (Zurich: Artemis, 1965) 64 n. 38; also Daiber, “Iamblichus’ Kommentar,” [2, 6].

bution to Iamblichus. Even though there is only one direct textual parallel between the Arabic commentary and Iamblichus' remaining works, namely, the anecdote of the Pythagorean who preferred to pay a fine of three talents rather than take an oath (f. 307r.4-6 ~ Iamblichus *VP* 144, 150), the terminology and ideas of the Arabic commentary "points unequivocally to Iamblichus as author."¹⁹ The difference between the Arabic commentary and the *Protrepticus* is due to the fact that the former was written at a later period than the latter; in fact, the Arabic commentary bears evidence of a "further development" ("Weiterentwicklung") of Iamblichus' thought vis-à-vis the *Protrepticus* and the *De vita Pythagorica*.²⁰

One may wonder whether this relationship between the Arabic commentary and Iamblichus' other known works does not rather point towards a later Neoplatonist influenced by Iamblichus,²¹ but in view of the present state of the evidence, I shall for this discussion accept the Iamblichian authorship of the Arabic commentary.²²

2.2 Hierocles of Alexandria

Very little is known of the life and work of Hierocles of Alexandria. He was a student of Plutarch of Athens who died AD 431/32, and he himself must have been active in the first half of the 5th century. As we have seen, he values the *Golden Verses* very highly and devotes a full-length commentary to the poem (122 pages in the Teubner edition).²³ Apart from the notes by Photius on Hierocles' work *On Providence* as well as his excerpts from this work (Photius *Bibliotheca* 214, 251), this commentary is

¹⁹ Daiber, "Iamblichus' Kommentar," [7-13]; quotation from p. [7].

²⁰ Ibid., [13].

²¹ O'Meara finds in this commentary "signs of some dependence on Greek Neoplatonic exegesis of the *Golden Verses*" (*Pythagoras Revived*, 230-31). He did not, of course, have access to Daiber's edition and translation. Neil Linley doubts whether this commentary goes back to a Greek original (*Ibn al-Ṭayyib: Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean Golden Verses* [Arethusa Monographs 10; Buffalo: Department of Classics, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1984] v).

²² The Arabic commentary will hereafter be cited as Iamblichus Arab. in CA.

²³ *Hieroclis in aureum Pythagoreorum carmen commentarius* (ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Köhler; BT; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1974). The best translation is also by Köhler, viz., *Hierokles: Kommentar zum pythagoreischen Goldenen Gedicht* (Griechische und lateinische Schriftsteller; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1983).

our major source for the philosophy of Hierocles.²⁴ According to Hierocles, "this is the object and place of the verses [sc. the *Golden Verses*] [in the curriculum], to impress a philosophic character on the students, before they continue to the other courses" (οὗτος μὲν ὁ σκοπὸς τῶν ἐπῶν καὶ ἡ τάξις, χαρακτηῖρα φιλόσοφον πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἀναγνωσμάτων ἐνθεῖναι τοῖς ἀκροαταῖς; in *CA* proem. 4). It is therefore probable that Hierocles' own teaching commenced with an interpretation of the *Golden Verses*.²⁵

Like Iamblichus, Hierocles quotes a few verses of the *Golden Verses* at a time, which are then discussed in detail.²⁶ Especially noteworthy is his treatment of the poem as a well-integrated whole by interpreting one part of it in terms of another. Also, Hierocles refers to the Pythagorean tradition whenever possible to elucidate a verse. Although the commentary is an honest attempt to understand the poem, it is still perhaps more an expression of Hierocles' own, Neoplatonic philosophy, than an accurate interpretation of the *Golden Verses* itself. He thus distinguishes three main parts: *GV* 1–44 deal with practical virtue, 45–66 with theoretical, and 67–71 with cathartic philosophy.²⁷ Hierocles' commentary is nevertheless not only an invaluable witness to the way the *Golden Verses* was understood in late antiquity, but also an important aid for our own understanding of the poem; thus, for example, Hierocles' interpretation of *GV* 9–20 as dealing with the four cardinal virtues is without doubt correct, as is his insight that the virtue dealt with in *GV* 27–39 is εὐβουλία, a species of φρόνησις.²⁸

²⁴ See Karl Praechter, "Hierokles (18)," *PW* 8 (1913) 1479–87, esp. 1480. For Hierocles' philosophy see also Ilsetraut Hadot, *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiéroclès et Simplicius* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978); Noël Aujoulat, *Le néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiéroclès d'Alexandrie. Filiations intellectuelles et spirituelles d'un néo-platonicien du Ve siècle* (Philosophia Antiqua 45; Leiden: Brill, 1986); Leendert Gerrit Westerink, "Hierokles II (Neuplatoniker)," *RAC* 15 (1991) 109–17.

²⁵ See Westerink, "Hierokles," 110; idem, "Proclus commentateur des *Vers d'Or*," in *Proclus et son influence* (ed. G. Boss and G. Seel; Actes du colloque de Neuchâtel juin 1985; Zurich: Grand Midi, 1987) 72. Cf. also Hadot, *Néoplatonisme alexandrin*, 162.

²⁶ There are twenty-seven lemmata altogether: *GV* 1–2a, 2b, 2c, 3, 4, 5, 6–8, 9–11a, 11b–12, 13–16, 17–20, 21–24a, 24b–26, 27–29, 30–31, 32–34, 35–38, 39, 40–44, 45–48a, 48b–49a, 49b–51, 52–53, 54–60, 61–66, 67–69, 70–71. They often give valuable indications as to the composition of the poem.

²⁷ See Westerink, "Hierokles," 110. Cf. the similar attempt by Iamblichus to relate various parts of the *Golden Verses* to different philosophical stages.

²⁸ Cf. Hierocles in *CA* 10.1–2, 10.16, 14.1, 18.1–2. For εὐβουλία as φρόνησις, cf. Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 1142b.

2.3 *Proclus*

The fourth commentary, attributed to Proclus, is only extant in an Arabic translation by Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib (died AD 1043), which is preserved in a single manuscript, Escorial 888, ff. 91r–114r. An edition of the text with a translation into English by Neil Linley has been published posthumously.²⁹ Before Linley's edition, scholars have surmised that the attribution to Proclus "is a misattribution due to the misreading of B[uruklus] [sc. Proclus] for the less known Neoplatonist Hierokles (which can be easily explained)."³⁰ A closer inspection of the commentary reveals that this hypothesis may be discarded forthwith; there is no connection between Hierocles' commentary and this one. Linley is skeptical of the attribution to Proclus; the commentary may well be the work of Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib himself.³¹

In a recent article, however, Linley's doctoral adviser, L. G. Westerink, has advanced the discussion concerning the authorship of this commentary considerably by taking at least three possibilities into account.³² The first is that the author was indeed Proclus Diadochus (AD 412–85), head of the Platonic school in Athens for more than forty-five years. Proclus knew the *Golden Verses*, since he cited the poem twice in his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*.³³ Westerink notes the following arguments in favor of this position: (a) There are a few similarities in doctrine and content with Proclus' work. These correspondences are not close enough to offer conclusive proof, however.³⁴ (b) Even though there is no mention in the Greek tradition of such a commentary by Proclus, the Arabic bibliography *Fihrist* refers to a Syriac and to an incomplete Arabic translation of a commentary by Proclus on the *Golden Verses*.³⁵ (c) Among the testimonia of the *Golden Verses* Neo-

²⁹ *Proclus' Commentary* (cited n. 21 above). Although the translation is excellent, this work is in many respects incomplete because of the premature death of the author.

³⁰ R. Walzer, "Buruklus," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., 1.1340; cited by Linley, *Proclus' Commentary*, vi. Cf. also *ibid.*, vii: "The question of the relationship between Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib's commentary and that of Hierocles was originally raised by Walzer." However, this suggestion had already been made by Lucien Leclerc, *Histoire de la médecine arabe I* (Paris, 1876) 198; see Manfred Ullmann, "Griechische Spruchdichtung im Arabischen" (Diss. Tübingen, 1959) 31–32.

³¹ *Proclus' Commentary*, viii, x.

³² Westerink, "Proclus commentateur" (cited n. 25 above), 61–78.

³³ Proclus in *Tim.* 1.203.25–27, 3.53.6–7.

³⁴ Westerink, "Proclus commentateur," 66–70.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 70–71.

platonists such as Porphyry, Iamblichus, Julian, Calcidius, Macrobius, Hierocles, Proclus, Ammonius, Simplicius, Elias, and David figure prominently,³⁶ indicating that this was a text much used in the Neoplatonic tradition. Hierocles appears to have used it as an introduction to the study of philosophy, and this may be true of Proclus as well, even though we lack evidence on this score.³⁷

The second candidate is the fairly unknown Proclus Procleius.³⁸ According to Hesychius (6th century AD), he did write a commentary on the *Golden Verses*:

Πρόκλος, ὁ Προκλήϊος χρηματίσας, Θεμεσίωνος, Λαοδικείας τῆς Συρίας, ιεροφάντης. ἔγραψε Θεολογίαν, Εἰς τὸν παρ' Ἡσιόδῳ τῆς Πανδώρας μῦθον, Εἰς τὰ χρυσᾶ ἔπη, Εἰς τὴν Νικομάχου Εἰσαγωγὴν τὴν ἀριθμητικὴν· καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ γεωμετρικά.

Proclus, called Procleius, son of Themesion, of Laodicea in Syria, hierophant. He wrote a *Theology*, a commentary on the myth of Pandora in Hesiod, a commentary on the *Golden Verses*, a commentary on Nicomachus' *Introduction to Arithmetic*, and a few other writings on geometry. (ap. *Suda*, s.v. Πρόκλος [Π 2472])

Apart from this note, there are a few other dubious references, which do not, however, add anything to our knowledge of this author.³⁹ On the basis of this note by Hesychius, Christ-Schmid-Stählin infer that Proclus Procleius formed part of the pagan revival under the emperor Julian, which would date him in the second half of the 4th century AD.⁴⁰ Since the office of hierophant was prohibited in a decree by Theodosius I, Proclus could not have functioned as such beyond the end of the 4th century.⁴¹

The last option is that the work is indeed a pseudepigraphon, “mais ce serait un pseudépigraphe au sens strict, et nullement un faux.” The evidence is too inconclusive to decide the question of authorship, but Westerink expresses a preference for Proclus Pro-

³⁶ See pp. 13–14 above. We should delete Julian and Macrobius from Westerink's list, since they are citing the independent Pythagorean oath on which *GV* 47–48a are based, and not the *Golden Verses* as such.

³⁷ Westerink, “Proclus commentateur,” 71–74.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 74–78.

³⁹ See *ibid.*, 74–76.

⁴⁰ Christ-Schmid-Stählin 2.2.1056. Cf. also A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire 1: A.D. 260–395* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) 742: 4th or 5th century (with a question mark).

⁴¹ Westerink, “Proclus commentateur,” 76.

cleius, since we at least know that he wrote such a commentary.⁴²

Daiber, too, considers Linley too skeptical about the Greek origin of the commentary. He finds nothing in the internal evidence that excludes an attribution to Proclus Diadochus, but he seems unaware of the possibility of Proclus Procleius as author.⁴³ According to Daiber, this commentary presupposes the discussion in the Arabic commentary attributed to Iamblichus.⁴⁴ The argument concerning the internal evidence would fit Proclus Procleius just as well as Proclus Diadochus; I am therefore inclined to follow Westerink's suggestion to attribute this work to Proclus Procleius.⁴⁵

The commentary is very superficial (particularly in comparison with that of Hierocles) and at times so incoherent that one may suspect it to be a summary of a larger work.⁴⁶ Be that as it may, it is clear that Ibn at-Ṭayyib (or an unknown predecessor) changed his source in a few places to make it more acceptable to a monotheistic Christian or Muslim audience: The plural 'gods' in *GV* 1 is changed to the singular (Proclus Arab. in *CA* f. 92r); elsewhere, however, the commentary still refers to astral gods (f. 108v). The commentary furthermore refers to the wrath of God (ff. 97r, 98v) and to an eternal punishment. The inconsistency in attributing the *Golden Verses* in some places to Pythagoras (passim) and in another to Empedocles (f. 91v), is probably also due to the late adapter.⁴⁷ The commentary does not have lemmata like those of Iamblichus and Hierocles, but paraphrases the text of the *Golden Verses* as it goes along.

No direct literary connection is discernible between any of the four commentaries; nor, for that matter, does any of the authors show an awareness of the work(s) of his predecessor(s). The main point of correspondence between the three complete commentaries (Iamblichus Arabus, Proclus Arabus, and Hierocles) is that they all divide the poem into a moral and a contemplative section;⁴⁸ this

⁴² Ibid., 78.

⁴³ Hans Daiber, review of *Ibn at-Ṭayyib: Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean Verses*, ed. and trans. Neil Linley, *Der Islam* 65 (1988) 134–37.

⁴⁴ Daiber, "Iamblichus' Kommentar," [18].

⁴⁵ O'Meara sees in *Proclus' Commentary*, whoever the author may be, yet another example of "the influence of Iamblichus' revival of Pythagoreanism" (*Pythagoras Revived*, 231–32). The commentary will henceforth be cited as Proclus Arab. in *CA*.

⁴⁶ Contra Daiber, *Der Islam* 65 (1988) 135.

⁴⁷ Westerink, "Proclus commentateur," 65.

⁴⁸ Cf. Iamblichus Arab. in *CA* f. 306v.10–20; Proclus Arab. in *CA* f. 108v; Hierocles in

may have been influenced by Iamblichus' characterization of the second half of the poem as dealing with *θεωρητικὴ φιλοσοφία* (*Protr.* 3, p. 11.5, 13–14).

CA proem. 2–4, 20.1–3. See also Westerink, “Proclus commentateur,” 68 (on Proclus and Hierocles); O’Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*, 230–31 (on Iamblichus Arabus). It is noteworthy that for both Hierocles and Iamblichus Arabus the turning point is between *GV* 45 and 46 (Hierocles in *CA* 20.3; Iamblichus Arab. in *CA* f. 306^v.19–20), while for Proclus it lies (less clearly, to be sure) between *GV* 49a and 49b. The same articulation is found in Iamblichus *Protr.* 3, p. 11.5–14.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORY OF TRANSMISSION

The *Golden Verses* has been transmitted in a multitude of manuscripts, many of them also containing Hierocles' commentary.¹ The oldest and by far the best of these manuscripts is *codex Vindobonensis philos.-philol. graecus* 314; consequently it forms the basis of all modern editions.² It contains, *inter alia*, the text of the *Golden Verses* (ff. 51^r–52^r) and that of Hierocles' commentary (ff. 52^v–110). The first part of the codex (ff. 1–112) was written by the scribe Johannes Grammatikos and is dated 28 July 925 (cf. f. 110); the second part (ff. 113–51) is by a different hand. The codex as a whole was produced by order of Arethas, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, who is probably also the author of the scholia in the margins of folios 1–110. According to Köhler, the text of the *Golden Verses* in this manuscript is derived from Hierocles' commentary and not from an independent tradition.³

A second manuscript type is represented by *codex Monacensis graecus* 490 (ff. 4–5) from the 15th century. Although many of its readings are inferior, its interest lies in the fact that it has additional verses after *GV* 39 and 45. Apart from these two manuscripts, numerous others have been collated by various authors, without much gain.⁴

¹ On the textual history of the latter see Friedrich Wilhelm Köhler, "Textgeschichte von Hierokles' Kommentar zum Carmen aureum der Pythagoreer" (Diss. Mainz, 1965).

² For a description of the manuscript see Köhler, "Textgeschichte," 6–12.

³ *Ibid.*, 108–9.

⁴ "A complete collation of the codices Laurentiani" has been published by V. Puntoni, viz., *Laurentianus* 9.32, f. 257^r; 10.22, f. 42^r; 31.20, f. 64^r; 32.26, f. 3^r; 32.50, f. 11^r; 55.7, ff. 281^v–282^r; 56.22, f. 191^v; 59.1, f. 192^v; 85.9, f. 3^v; 87.10, f. 183^v ("Postille sopra gli aurei versi dei pitagorici," in *Studi di filologia greca* 1 [ed. E. Piccolomini; Turin: Loescher, 1882; reprint, 1886] 181–92). Ernst Diehl has also collated the following manuscripts from Munich: *Monacensis* gr. 113 (15th century), ff. 21–22^r; 481 (14th century), f. 1; 476 (13th century), f. 58^r (*Anthologia lyrica* [2 vols. in 5 pts.; BT; Leipzig: Teubner, 1922–25] 1.2.i = Douglas Young, ed., *Theognis, Ps.-Pythagoras, Ps.-Phocylides, Chares, Anonymi aulodia, fragmentum Teliambicum* [post Ernestum Diehl iterum edidit; BT; Leipzig: Teubner, 1971] xiv–xv). A number of the most ancient manuscripts has been collated by P. C. van der Horst (*Vers d'or*, xii–xxiv), viz., *Parisinus* 2983 (11th century), *Laurentianus*

Some manuscripts have extensive glosses and even paraphrases of the *Golden Verses*. *Codex Zabordae* 95 from the 14th century has the text of the *Golden Verses*, followed by a Byzantine Λεξι-κὸν τῶν Χρυσῶν ἐπῶν Πυθαγόρα, which glosses words and phrases from the *Golden Verses*.⁵ There are also extensive glosses in *codex Laurentianus* 87.10.⁶ Paraphrasing translations of the *Golden Verses* into demotic Greek are found in *codex Upsaliensis graecus* 21 from the 15th or 16th century—which has the text of the *Golden Verses* with a φράσις in the margin—as well as in *codex Mus. Britt.* 18190 (*add*) (ff. 236–237^r) from ca. 1600.⁷ One of the de Medici manuscripts (*codex Laurentianus* 55.7) has Christianized the text of the *Golden Verses* by changing references to a plurality of gods, to *daimones*, and to Zeus, into phrases less offensive to Christians.⁸

Translations of the *Golden Verses* into Arabic have also been made from a very early date.⁹ The earliest one we know of is that used by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (died ca. AD 875) in his *Florilegium*, which was probably made by a predecessor or older contemporary of Ḥunayn.¹⁰ Other translations, probably based on that used by Ḥunayn, are to be found in the *Ṣiwān al-hikma* of Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (10th century) and in the *Jāwīdhān Khiradh* of Miska-

85.9 (12th century), *Vaticanus* 38 (AD 1323), *Vaticanus* 114 (13th/14th century), *Parisinus* 1630 (14th century), *Laurentianus* 9.32 (14th/15th century), *Leidensis* Q 67 B (16th century). A few manuscripts have been collated individually. They are: *codex Lucensis* 3002 (15th century), ff. 1^v–3^v (see Bruno Lavagnini, “Un codicetto lucchese delle χρυσᾶ ἔπη,” *Bollettino di filologia classica* 24 [1918] 169–72); *Upsaliensis gr.* 21 (15th/16th century), ff. 29^r–30^v, and *Bodleianus auct.* F 6.26 (14th/15th century) (see Sigfrid Lindstam, “Codex Upsaliensis Graecus 21,” *Eranos* 29 [1931] 116–54, esp. 146–54); and *Zabordae* 95 (14th century), ff. 364–65 (see K. Tsantsanoglou, “Τὰ ψευδο-πυθαγόρεια ‘Χρυσᾶ ἔπη’ στὸν κώδικα 95 τῆς Ζάβορδας,” *EEThess(philos)* 13 [1974] 11–18).

⁵ See Tsantsanoglou, “‘Χρυσᾶ ἔπη’”; the text of the Λεξικόν is on pp. 15–18 of the article.

⁶ See Puntoni, “Sopra gli aurei versi,” 183–86.

⁷ See Sigfrid Lindstam, “En nygrekisk parafras till pseudo-Pythagoras Dicta aurea,” in *Apophoreta Gotoburgensia Vilelmo Lundström oblata* (Göteborg: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, 1936) 339–45.

⁸ See Puntoni, “Sopra gli aurei versi,” 182–83.

⁹ See Franz Rosenthal, “Some Pythagorean Documents Transmitted in Arabic I: On the Translation of the ‘Golden Verses,’” *Orientalia* n.s. 10 (1941) 104–15; Ullmann, “Griechische Spruchdichtung,” 21–51; M. Plessner, “The Translations of the ‘Golden Verses’ of Pythagoras in Arabic and Hebrew” (in Hebrew), *Eshkoloth* 4 (1962) 58; Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Wisdom Literature in Arabic Translation: A Study of the Graeco-Arabic Gnomologia* (American Oriental Series 60; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1975) 445–46.

¹⁰ This conclusion is based primarily on the translator’s use of technical terminology (Daiber, “Iamblichus’ Kommentar,” [5–6]).

wayh (died AD 1030). The text of the latter's translation forms the basis of Johannes Elichmann's 1640 edition, the first edition of an Arabic translation of the *Golden Verses* in Europe.¹¹ A new edition of the Arabic text of Ḥunayn's translation with the probable underlying Greek text is given by Ullmann.¹² The same version is quoted in the Arabic commentary by Iamblichus which has been edited by Daiber. Daiber's edition of this version has the advantage that it is based directly on the two manuscripts containing the Iamblichus commentary (Princeton-Garrett 308 and the Qum MS), without the vagaries of the tradition history; a textual comparison has basically confirmed Ullmann's edition and only in a few cases has it been necessary to correct the latter.¹³ Since Ḥunayn's translation predates our earliest manuscript, it is obviously of great importance for the textual history of the *Golden Verses*. The pertinent variants are summarized by Rosenthal, who concludes that the tradition represented by the Arabic translator is not a very good one.¹⁴

The *editio princeps* of the *Golden Verses* was published by Aldus Manutius in Venice, 1494, and since then the *Golden Verses* has continuously been republished, often as part of a collection of Greek gnomic poetic texts intended for use in schools.¹⁵

Modern critical editions of the *Golden Verses* start with the one by August Nauck, which is an addendum to his edition of Iamblichus *De vita Pythagorica*.¹⁶ (Prior to Nauck's edition, the standard text had been Mullach's edition of the *Golden Verses*, which was printed in his edition of Hierocles's commentary, and reprinted in the first volume of his *Fragmenta philosophorum*

¹¹ *Cebetis Thebani Tabula*, Graece, Arabice, Latine. Item *Aurea carmina Pythagorae*, cum paraphrasi Arabica auctore Johanne Elichmanno M.D. Cum praefatione Cl. Salmasii (Lugduni Batavorum: Typis Iohannis Maire, 1640).

¹² Ullmann, "Griechische Spruchdichtung," 32–50. An English translation of Miskawayh's version may be found in Franz Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam* (trans. Emile and Jeremy Marmorstein; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975) 118–20. The Arabic text published by L. Cheikho is based on an inferior tradition (L. Malouf, C. Eddé, and L. Cheikho, eds., *Traité inédits d'anciens philosophes arabes musulmans et chrétiens avec des traductions de traités grecs d'Aristote, de Platon et de Pythagore par Ishâq Ibn Honein* [2d ed.; Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1911] 59–63).

¹³ Daiber, "Iamblichus' Kommentar," [3–5].

¹⁴ Rosenthal, "Pythagorean Documents," 112–15; so also Daiber, "Iamblichus' Kommentar," [5].

¹⁵ See Mullach, *Hieroclis commentarius*, xxiii–xxiv, for a brief survey of early editions; cf. also Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Graeca* 1.797–98.

¹⁶ Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 203–7.

Graecorum.)¹⁷ Nauck selected two manuscripts as basis for his edition, namely, *codex Vindobonensis philos.-philol. graecus* 314 (V) and *codex Monacensis graecus* 490 (M). The basic correctness of this decision has been confirmed by all subsequent editors, namely, Ernst Diehl, P. C. van der Horst, Antonio Farina, and Douglas Young.¹⁸ Although there are no serious differences between modern editions, the edition by Young is the most useful, since the apparatus includes references to the testimonia as well as to parallels in other texts.

The text printed later in the present work is based on Young's edition. Besides the few substantive variations noted in the apparatus to the text printed below, my text differs from Young's only in the following minor respects: (a) there are a few differences in capitalization, indentation, and punctuation;¹⁹ and (b) Young indicates a sharp break between GV 48a and 48b, while I place that break between GV 49a and 49b.²⁰

¹⁷ Mullach, *Hieroclis commentarius*, 1–20 = FPG 1.193–99.

¹⁸ See Diehl, *Anthologia lyrica* 1.2.i; van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, xii–xxiv; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 18; Young, *Theognis*, xvii. As far as the text of the *Golden Verses* is concerned, there is no difference between the first edition by Young (1961), and the second revised edition (1971).

¹⁹ Young has lowercase and no indentation at the beginning of GV 45 and 65, ἀρετῆς instead of Ἀρετῆς in GV 46, and Μοῖρα instead of μοῖρα in GV 57. I have a semicolon at the end of GV 9, Young a comma; I add a comma after ἀθάνατος in GV 71.

²⁰ There are a few small errors in the apparatus of Young's edition: (a) In the apparatus to GV 33–34, Young cites "Ps.-Plat. Anter. 134c," which should of course be "Ps.-Plat. Amat. 134c." (b) In the apparatus to GV 35, Young refers to Plutarch "consol. ad Apoll. 5 p. 609c"—this should read "consol. ad uxorem 5 p. 609c." (c) According to Young, M reads δ' ἦι in GV 52—this is patently wrong, since M accidentally omitted GV 52–53.

CHAPTER FOUR

TITLE AND AUTHORSHIP

As is the case with so many writings from Antiquity, the name of the author of the *Golden Verses* has been lost in the vagaries of the poem's history of tradition. In our case, however, this may not be accidental, but an intentional omission of the author's name. It may well be that the author considered the poem to be an integral part of the Pythagorean tradition, an expression not so much of his own mind, but of the Pythagorean movement as a whole. If, as I shall argue in a later chapter, this poem was used as an introduction to the teachings of a Pythagorean group, the poem would have had an institutional function; it would therefore have been seen as the product of the group as a whole, and not that of a single author. Hierocles may therefore be right in calling the poem "a memorial of not one specific Pythagorean, but of the whole saintly assembly, ... a joint apothegm of the school as a whole" (Hierocles in CA 27.11).¹

The poem is admittedly attributed to Pythagoras in some testimonia, but in even more the poem is simply attributed to "the Pythagoreans."² A similar situation obtains in the various titles of the poem we find in manuscripts. Some, like *Monacensis graecus* 490 and *Upsaliensis graecus* 21, have the simple title "Pythagorean Golden Verses" (πυθαγορικὰ χρυσᾶ ἔπη). The oldest and most reliable manuscript, *Vindobonensis philos.-philol. graecus* 314, has "The Pythagorean Verses called 'Golden' because they contain an elementary teaching of the most perfect philosophy of the Pythagoreans" (πυθαγορικὰ ἔπη τὰ οὕτως ἐπικαλούμενα χρυσᾶ στοιχείωσιν περιέχοντα τῆς τελειοτάτης τῶν πυθαγορείων φιλοσοφίας). This title is clearly derived from the description Hierocles gives of the poem (in CA 27.11), as Köhler has recognized.³ Only in some of the lesser manuscripts is the *Golden*

¹ Cited in full on pp. 16–17 above.

² See pp. 15–16 above.

³ Köhler, "Textgeschichte von Hierokles' Kommentar," 108. For Hierocles' description,

Verses explicitly attributed to Pythagoras; there we find “These are the Golden Verses of Pythagoras of Samos” (Πυθαγόρου σαμίου ἔπη τὰδ’ ἔνεστι τὰ χρυσᾶ), or “The Golden Verses of the wise Pythagoras” (ἔπη τὰ χρυσᾶ τοῦ σοφοῦ Πυθαγόρου).

As we shall see presently, it is highly unlikely that the poem originated in a period as early as that in which Pythagoras himself lived, that is, in the late 6th and early 5th centuries BC. In addition, the author swears an oath by Pythagoras (“Yes, by him who imparted to our soul the *tetraktys*, fount of ever-flowing nature”; *GV* 47–48), which surely precludes the possibility of the latter being the poem’s author! To my mind, this same fact makes it very improbable that the poem could even have been composed in Pythagoras’ name; it is therefore not pseudepigraphical in the strict sense of the word.⁴ Any attempt to father the poem on any other known author, whatever his date, must be firmly rejected.⁵ The best one can hope for is to indicate the possible group or community within which a poem like the *Golden Verses* could have originated; thus the question of authorship cannot be isolated from that of the date and circumstances of composition of the *Golden Verses*.

The title ‘Golden Verses’ is probably not original. As we have seen in chapter 2, the poem is not cited by this title before the time of Alciphron and Iamblichus, but verses from the poem are already quoted from the time of Chrysippus onwards. We are thus left with two options: either the poem existed before the time of Alciphron and Iamblichus, but without the title ‘Golden Verses,’

see the quotation on pp. 16–17 above.

⁴ A similar view is held by Heinrich Dörrie, “Pythagoras 1C: Der nachklassische Pythagoreismus,” *PW* 24.1 (1963) 851. The Neoplatonist David thought the *Golden Verses* had been written in Pythagoras’ name in order to honor him (*Proll.* 8, p. 26.6–8). Nauck, too, considers the poem a pseudepigraphon; for him the inclusion of the well-known Pythagorean oath (see below) simply demonstrates the ineptitude of the author (“De aureo carmine,” 224). Zeller has a different interpretation. According to him, in its original form (τὸν ἀμετέρῳ γενεῇ παραδόντα) the oath could only have been by Pythagoras, but its present form (τὸν ἀμετέρῳ ψυχῇ παραδόντα) also allows for τὸν παραδόντα to be the deity; in this case Pythagoras could be the putative author of the poem (*Philosophie der Griechen* 1.378 n. 3). It is by no means certain, however, that γενεῇ was the original term used; our oldest witness (Aëtius 1.3.8) has κεφαλῇ instead. And even if γενεῇ was the original term, I do not see that it makes as much difference as Zeller would have it. Recently Untersteiner has also used the *Golden Verses* as an example of a philosophical pseudepigraphon (Mario Untersteiner, *Problemi di filologia filosofica* [ed. L. Sichirillo and M. Venturi Ferriolo; Milan: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1980] 118–20).

⁵ Cf. the proposals listed on p. 3–4 above. For criticism of such attempts, see also Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 1.378; Ziegler, *Geschichte der Ethik* 1.26–27.

or the origins of the poem and its title coincide, in which case the poem could not have come into existence before the end of the 2d century AD. I shall argue in the next chapter that the poem could already have existed in the time of Chrysippus; from its origin until sometime late in the 2d century AD it must have circulated without a definite title, and it was perhaps just vaguely referred to as 'Pythagorean verses' (πυθαγορικὰ ἔπη) or 'Pythagorean precepts' (e.g., πυθαγορικαὶ παραινέσεις or πυθαγορικὰ παραγγέλματα).⁶ At a later stage, then, the phrase 'golden verses,' originally intended as a description of the poem, came to be used as its title.⁷ When the phrase χρυσῶ ἔπη is first applied to the poem in Alciphron and Iamblichus,⁸ it already functions as a title, and its use as title must therefore predate them. This is especially clear in the case of Alciphron; he gives a satirical description of a dinner party during which Archibius the Pythagorean, "breaking his silence, hummed some of the *Golden Verses* to a musical air." This mention, without being clarified any further, assumes that the *Golden Verses* was known by that title to (at least some of) Alciphron's readers.⁹

⁶ Cf. Galen *Affect. dignot.* 6.10: ταύτας δὲ τὰς φερομένας ὡς Πυθαγόρου παραινέσεις; Origen frg. in *Ps.* 4:5: τὸ αἰοῖδιμον ἐαντοῖς [sc. the Pythagoreans] ῥησεῖδιον; Porphyry *VP* 40: ταῦτα τὰ ἔπη. See also chap. 2, n. 5 above.

⁷ Cf. *Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi* 8: χρυσῶ στίχοι; Aristophanes *Pluto* 268: χρυσὸν ἐπῶν; Lucretius 3.12: aurea dicta (of Epicurus); Cicero *Off.* 3.70: illa aurea [verba], of some ancient saying; Athenaeus 7.320f: ἐν τοῖς χρυσοῖς ἔπεισι, referring to Archestratus *Gastrologia*. Cf. also the titles of Pseudo-Phocylides and of the *Sentences of Democritus* in some manuscripts: Φωκυλίδου ἀργυρᾶ ἔπη ἡρωϊκὰ in MSS V2 and Mb; γνῶμαι χρυσαῖ, in MSS B and C; see Küchler, *Weisheitstraditionen*, 262–63. The Pythagorean sayings translated into Syriac in a 6th or 7th century manuscript, are entitled "Words of the philosopher Pythagoras concerning virtue, that because of their meaning possess the beauty of gold." See J. Gildemeister, "Pythagorassprüche in syrischer Überlieferung," *Hermes* 4 (1870) 81–98, esp. 81, 84–85. The 'Golden Rule' also comes to mind, but this expression is not used before the 16th century; see Albrecht Dihle, "Goldene Regel," *RAC* 11 (1981) 930. According to the Arabic bibliography *Fihrist*, the title derives from the fact that Galen admired the poem so much that he wrote it in gold (see p. 20 above). Although we have no confirmation of this dubious tradition, Galen's date (second half of the 2d century AD) fits the time when the *Golden Verses* must have received its name. The word ἔπη may either mean 'sayings, proverbs,' or, perhaps more probably, denote poetry written in hexameters; see LSJ, s.v. ἔπος.

⁸ Alciphron 3.19.7; Iamblichus *Protr.* 3, p. 10.18.

⁹ Delatte suggests that Athenaeus (fl. ca. AD 200) might also already have known the *Golden Verses* by that title: having ironically referred to the gourmand Archestratus as "a veritable Pythagorean for frugality" (Athenaeus 7.30.288a), Athenaeus later on (7.115.320f) refers to "the fancy cook Archestratus" ... 'golden verses' (τοῖς χρυσοῖς ἔπεισι). If this reference is really meant as a joke, it presupposes the existence of a Pythagorean *Golden Verses* (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 45).

On the other hand, this title could not have been in common use before the end of the second or even the beginning of the 3d century AD, since authors like Plutarch, Pseudo-Plutarch, Epictetus, Galen, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Porphyry seem unaware of it.¹⁰ Even after Iamblichus there still is a consciousness of the descriptive value of the title. Jerome refers to the poem as “those golden precepts” (*illa χρυσᾶ παραγγέλματα*; *c. Rufin.* 3.39), and Simplicius cites *GV* 7–8 as “that truly golden precept” (*τῷ χρυσῷ ὄντως ἐκείνῳ παραγγέλματι*; *in Epict.* 30, p. 328). Gregory of Nazianzus, on the other hand, polemicizes against the fact that it is called ‘golden’; according to him it should have been called the ‘Leaden Verses’ (*τῶν Χρυσῶν ἐπῶν, εἴτ’ οὖν μολιβῶν*; *Or.* 4.102).

¹⁰ Cf. Plutarch *Consol. ad Apoll.* 29.116e, *De superst.* 7.168b, *De curios.* 1.515f; [Plutarch] *Vit. Hom.* 153; Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 3.10.2–3, 4.6.32–35; Galen *Affect. dignot.* 5.10, 6.10; Clement of Alexandria *Paed.* 1.10.94.1; Origen frg. in *Ps.* 4:5; Porphyry *VP* 40.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DATE OF THE *GOLDEN VERSES*

The date of the *Golden Verses* is the most vexing problem we have to address in these introductory chapters, as may be inferred from the wide disparity in dates assigned by previous scholars.¹ We therefore have to proceed with due caution and sift the evidence with some care.

The testimonia seem to provide us with at least a definite *terminus ante quem*: in a discussion on fate the Stoic Chrysippus (281/77–208/04 BC) quotes *GV* 54 as something “said by the Pythagoreans”:

Διὸ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Πυθαγορείων εἴρηται·
γνώσει δ' ἀνθρώπους ἀνθαίρετα πῆματ' ἔχοντας,
ὥς τῶν βλαβῶν ἐκάστοις παρ' αὐτοῦς γινομένων καὶ καθ' ὁρμὴν αὐ-
τῶν ἀμαρτανόντων τε καὶ βλαπτομένων καὶ κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν διάνοιαν
καὶ <διὰ> θείων.

<διὰ> θείων Sedley

Hence it is also said by the Pythagoreans,

“You will learn that men have chosen their own troubles,”
meaning that the harm they suffer lies in each individual’s own hands,
and that it is in accordance with their impulse and their own mentality
and character that they go wrong and are harmed.²

On the basis of this testimonium we may postulate a *terminus ante quem* of not later than ca. 300–250 BC.

However, this *terminus* has been seriously questioned by

¹ For the diverging opinions of pre-Mullachian scholars, see the summary given at the beginning of chap. 1 above. Even among more recent scholars we find a wide spectrum of views on the date, ranging from the 6th century BC (Farina) to the 4th century AD (Nauck)! For other discussions of the problem, see Nauck, “De aureo carmine”; Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 1.378 n. 3; Pesenti, “Pythagorica”; Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 45; van der Horst, *Vers d’or*, xxxiv–xxxviii; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 15–17.

² Chrysippus ap. Gellius 7.2.12 = *SVF* 2.1000, p. 294.25–29; trans. A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 1.388–89 (= frg. 62D5), slightly adapted.

Nauck as being much too early, and since his position has more or less become the *opinio communis*, it needs to be considered with care. The case against the 'early' Chrysippian date may be summarized as follows: (a) None of the early testimonia before the time of Alciphron and Iamblichus (i.e., 3d century AD) cites the *Golden Verses* by name and they may therefore not be used as evidence for the existence of the poem. To this we may add that in the list of known 'Pythagorean' works given by Heraclides Lembus (2d century BC; ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.7), none of the descriptions appears to fit the *Golden Verses*, even though many of the works listed apparently dealt with the same topics as the *Golden Verses*. (b) The poem is incoherent and lacks unity; it is in fact a mere compilation of disparate sources. The earlier testimonia are to verses which existed independently of the *Golden Verses* and which were later used by the author who compiled the latter poem, adding a few inferior verses of his own. Delatte's contribution is to suggest that all the 'early' verses were taken from a 5th-century Pythagorean *Ἰερὸς λόγος*. (c) The later, 'inferior' verses are shown up by exhibiting bad meter and using late words, as well as by contradicting early Pythagorean doctrine.

Under closer scrutiny, however, this position does not hold. (a) As we have seen in the previous chapter, there is no reason why the *composition* of the poem and its *designation* 'Golden Verses' had to coincide—the poem could easily have circulated without a title until sometime in the second century AD. The fact that Heraclides Lembus does not mention the poem is inconclusive; it simply means that he or his source did not know it, nothing more. (b) As will be demonstrated in a later chapter, the *Golden Verses* does indeed exhibit a conceptual unity; the 'looseness' of its structure is characteristic of gnomic texts. The compilation theory is based on a misunderstanding of the way these texts are composed. However, even if the poem were incoherent, this fact in itself does not prove that it comes from late antiquity. Incoherence is not the prerogative of a specific age! (c) It remains to be seen whether the internal evidence indicates a late date—I would argue that this is not the case. Unless we can find any conclusive evidence that precludes Chrysippus' having known and used the poem, his testimony stands as indication of the *terminus ante quem*. In the rest of this chapter, the various strands of evidence will be examined in detail to determine whether any such contraindications exist.

1 *Testimonia*

Although there are more than twenty quotations of, or allusions to lines in the *Golden Verses* before Alciphron and Iamblichus, these are mainly to two units, namely, *GV* 40–44 and 47–48a. The former are quoted or alluded to by Cato the Elder, Seneca, Plutarch, Epictetus, Galen, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Porphyry, and Diogenes Laertius,³ while for the latter we have testimonies by Aëtius, Nicomachus, Theo of Smyrna, Lucian, Sextus Empiricus, Hippolytus, and Porphyry.⁴ Other verses quoted in this period are *GV* 7–8 (Plutarch?), 12 (Galen), 17–18 (Plutarch and Pseudo-Plutarch), and 54 (Chrysippus).⁵

GV 47–48a (ναὶ μὰ τὸν ἀμετέρῃ ψυχῇ παραδόντα τετρακτύν, / παγὰν ἀενάου φύσεως) definitely existed independently of the *Golden Verses* in a different form as the Pythagorean oath, which is first attested by Aëtius (fl. ca. AD 100):

οὐ μὰ τὸν ἀμετέρῃ κεφαλῇ παραδόντα τετρακτύν
παγὰν ἀενάου φύσεως ρίζωμά τ' ἔχουσιν.

No, by him who handed down to us the *tetraktys*,
containing the source and root of eternal nature.⁶

This oath differs in two respects from the one we find in the *Golden Verses*: it is negative instead of positive, and the second verse of the couplet is longer, completing a dactylic hexameter.⁷ Scholars have rightly considered this form as the original of which

³ Cato ap. Cicero *Sen.* 38; Seneca *Dial.* 5.36.1–4; Plutarch *De superst.* 7.168b, *De curios.* 1.515f; Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 3.10.2–3, 4.6.32–35; Galen *Affect. dignot.* 6.10; Clement of Alexandria *Paed.* 1.10.94.1; Origen frg. in *Ps.* 4:5; Porphyry *VP* 40; Diogenes Laertius 8.22.

⁴ Aëtius 1.3.8; Nicomachus ap. *Theol. ar.* 18, p. 22.20–22; Theo of Smyrna *Expos. rer. math.*, p. 94.4–6; Lucian *Vit. auct.* 4; Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 4.2, 7.94; Hippolytus *Haer.* 6.23.4; Porphyry *VP* 20.

⁵ Plutarch frg. 86 Sandbach (= scholia on Hesiod *Op.* 707–8); Galen *Affect. dignot.* 5.10; Plutarch *Consol. ad Apoll.* 29.116e; [Plutarch] *Vit. Hom.* 153; Chrysippus, *SVF* 2.1000. Although Sandbach accepts Plutarch's frg. 86 as authentic, he has doubts concerning the passage in which the allusion to *GV* 7–8 is made.

⁶ Aëtius 1.3.8 = DK 58B15 = *Iusiurandum*, p. 170.12–16 Thesleff. All references to Thesleff as editor are to his collection *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period*.

⁷ Other, minor variations also occur in various authors; these variations are conveniently summarized by Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 229–30; and by Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 250–52.

GV 47–48a are an adaptation.⁸ All the ancient authors referred to above in connection with GV 47–48a are quoting this longer form and can therefore not be taken as evidence for the existence of the *Golden Verses*.⁹ Furthermore, the longer form of the oath continues to be attested even after Iamblichus by authors like Methodius, Julian, Macrobius, Stobaeus, Proclus, and David; only Proclus connects it with “the father of the *Golden Verses*.”¹⁰ The oath in its negative form was probably originally used when Pythagoreans were sworn to secrecy. The Doric dialect is an indication of its relative antiquity, but in its present form it does not go back further than the time of Empedocles (483/82–423 BC)—key terms in the oath such as *ρίζώματα* and *πηγή* can be traced back to him, and “the general idea of *φύσις* is scarcely likely to have existed before the second half of the 5th century.”¹¹

The second unit, namely, GV 40–44, was very popular. Although it could have circulated independently before the composition of the *Golden Verses*, we have no definite evidence that this was indeed the case. The verses are the following:

μὴ δ' ὕπνον μαλακοῖσιν ἐπ' ὄμμασι προσδέξασθαι,
πρὶν τῶν ἡμερινῶν ἔργων τρὶς ἑκάστον ἐπελθεῖν·
“πῇ παρέβην; τί δ' ἔρεξα; τί μοι δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη;
ἀρξάμενος δ' ἀπὸ πρῶτου ἐπέξιθι καὶ μετέπειτα
δειλὰ μὲν ἐκπρήξας ἐπιπλήσσο, χρηστὰ δὲ τέρπευ.

Do not welcome sleep upon your soft eyes
before you have reviewed each of the day's deeds three times:
“Where did I transgress? What did I accomplish? What duty did I neglect?”
Beginning from the first one go through them in detail, and then,
if you have brought about worthless things, reprimand yourself, but if
you have achieved good things, be glad.

The Pythagorean practice to which GV 40–44 refer, was given

⁸ Cf. Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 249–50; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 186–88.

⁹ An exception is perhaps Hippolytus (*Haer.* 6.23.4): although he quotes the longer form, i.e., a full couplet, his oath is positive (*οὐ μὴ ...*). This suggests that he also knew the *Golden Verses*, so that the oath he cites is a contaminated form.

¹⁰ Methodius *Symp.* 6.5.147; Julian *Or.* 9.196c; Macrobius *in Somn. Scip.* 1.6.41; Stobaeus 1.10.12; Proclus *in Tim.* 3.53.5–7; David *Proll.* 15, p. 48.24–28.

¹¹ See Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 186–88 (quotation p. 186 n. 155). The fullest discussion of the *τετρακτύς* is given by Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 249–68; see esp. 249–53, 265–68, on the oath itself. The oath is ascribed to Empedocles by Nicomachus in *Theol. ar.* 18, p. 22.20.

two different interpretations in antiquity: On the one hand it was seen as moral self-examination and as such had a cathartic function. On the other hand it was considered an exercise of the memory and thus formed part of one's mental training.¹² Furthermore, various authors indicate different occasions during the day for this practice. The *Golden Verses* itself views the practice primarily under its moral aspect and appoints the end of the day as the fitting time. Keeping these two sets of differences in mind, we may be able to distinguish between testimonia which simply refer to the Pythagorean practice as such, and those which may be based on the *Golden Verses*.

The earliest attestation is by Cato, who merely refers to the daily exercise of one's memory as a Pythagorean custom: *Pythagoreorumque more, exercendae memoriae gratia, quid quoque die dixerim audierim egerim commemoro vesperi* ("... in order to exercise my memory, I follow the practice of the Pythagoreans and run over in my mind every evening all that I have said, heard, or done during the day"; ap. Cicero *Sen.* 38).

According to Seneca, his teacher, the 'Pythagorean' Sextius (fl. under Augustus),¹³ practiced self-examination every evening:

Animus ... cotidie ad rationem reddendam uocandus est. Faciebat hoc Sextius, ut consummato die, cum se ad nocturnam quietem recepisset, interrogaret animum suum: "Quod hodie malum tuum sanasti? Cui uitio obstitisti? Qua parte melior es?" ... Quicquam ergo pulchrius hac consuetudine excutiendi totum diem? Qualis ille somnus post recognitionem sui sequitur, quam tranquillus, quam altus ac liber, cum aut laudatus est animus aut admonitus et speculator sui censorque secretus cognouit de moribus suis.

The mind ... should be summoned to give an account of itself every day. Sextius had this habit, and when the day was over and he had retired to his nightly rest, he would put these questions to his soul: "What bad habit have you cured today? What fault have you resisted? In what respect are you better?" ... Can anything be more excellent than this practice of thoroughly sifting the whole day? And how delightful

¹² The Pythagorean doctrine of ἀνάμνησις probably had a religious, and not an epistemological basis (as is the case with Plato); cf. Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 213–15. The moral and intellectual aspects of the practice under consideration are thus closer than would appear; cf. Lucian *Vir. auct.* 3, where 'Pythagoras' explains that the first step toward recollection is the purification of the soul.

¹³ For Sextius as a Pythagorean, see Seneca *QNat.* 7.32.2.

the sleep that follows this self-examination—how tranquil it is, how deep and untroubled, when the soul has either praised or admonished itself, and when this secret examiner and critic of self has given report of its own character! (*Dial.* 5.36.1–2; trans. J. W. Basore, LCL)

This practice agrees with *GV* 40–44 in several respects: we find the same form, a threefold questioning followed by praise and blame; the function is to account for what one has done by way of “thoroughly sifting the whole day” (cf. *GV* 41, 43); and the time is before going to bed. In both passages we also find a description of the quality of rest that follows such an examination: Seneca has ‘delightful’ (literally, ‘of what quality,’ i.e., ‘how excellent!’), ‘tranquil,’ ‘deep,’ and ‘untroubled,’ while in the *Golden Verses*, “sleep upon your soft eyes” is an *hypallage adiectivi* for “soft sleep upon your eyes.” These correspondences suggest very strongly that Sextius (or at least Seneca) knew *GV* 40–44.

The first direct quotation (of *GV* 42), though without attribution, is to be found in Plutarch, who cites it as an example of introspection (*De superst.* 7.168b, *De curios.* 1.515f). Epictetus quotes *GV* 40–44 in full as an example of the right judgment (*δόγμα*) to have at hand before going to bed.¹⁴ Clement of Alexandria quotes *GV* 44 as a precept of Pythagoras in support of his thesis that both praise and blame may be used in elementary instruction (*Paed.* 1.10.94.1). Origen cites *GV* 42 as “the famous saying” (*τὸ ἀοίδιμον ῥησείδιον*) Pythagoreans apply to themselves when going to bed (frg. in *Ps.* 4:5). With the exception of Cato, all of these testimonia are quite in accord with the *Golden Verses* and there seems to be no reason why they could not be dependent on the poem.

Other important early testimonia are those by Galen, Porphyry, and Diogenes Laertius. In his work *Περὶ διαγνώσεως καὶ θεραπειᾶς τῶν ἐν <τῇ> ἐκάστου ψυχῇ ἰδίῳ παθῶν* (*On the diagnosis and cure of the passions in one's soul*) Galen gives advice on how to master passions like anger (esp. *Affect. dignot.* 4.5–6.11). One should, among other things, consider beforehand what one has to do each day and not be swept along by passions and desires like anger, sex, gluttony, drunkenness, and “unnatural shameless conduct” (*Affect. dignot.* 5.6, 6.7, 6.9), and one should consult people older and more experienced than oneself in determining

¹⁴ Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 3.10.2–3, without attribution; in *Epict. Diss.* 4.6.32, *GV* 40 and 42 are attributed to Pythagoras.

one's faults (6.10). He then continues:

εἶτα [sc. χρῆ] <ταῦτα> καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν αὐτὸν ἀναμνησκειν, ἄμεινον μὲν πολλᾶκις, εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἀλλὰ πάντως γε κατὰ τὴν ἔω, πρὶν ἄρχεσθαι τῶν πράξεων, εἰς ἑσπέραν δέ, πρὶν ἀναπαύσεσθαι μέλλειν. ἐγὼ δὴ πού καὶ ταύτας δὴ τὰς φερομένας ὡς Πυθαγόρου παραινέσεις εἴθισμαι δις τῆς ἡμέρας ἀναγινώσκειν μὲν τὰ πρῶτα, λέγειν δ' ἀπὸ στόματος ὕστερον.

Furthermore, one should remind oneself of these things each day. It would be better to do this many times, but otherwise at least in the morning, before starting with your business, and in the evening, before going to rest. I in any case am accustomed to review those exhortations circulating in Pythagoras' name twice during the day: to read them first, and then to say them out loud later. (*Affect. dignot.* 6.10)

Galen refers here to two well-known psychagogic practices: the first is to consider one's intentions carefully before putting them to action; the second is to examine retrospectively at the end of the day everything one has done (compare also Sextius' practice as described by Seneca in the quotation above).¹⁵ It is to strengthen him in these practices that Galen reads and recites "those exhortations circulating in Pythagoras' name." As we shall see in the following chapters, the *Golden Verses* indeed contains exhortations to practice deliberation before action (*GV* 27–28, 39). It also, as we have seen, has a section on self-examination. I shall demonstrate in the following chapters that the main objective of the first part of the poem was to instill certain moral principles and to make the reader more conscious of his actions, in order that he may, among other things, control passions like gluttony, sleep, sex, and anger (cf. *GV* 9–11). It is therefore fairly certain that Galen is here referring to the *Golden Verses*.¹⁶ This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that he cites *GV* 12 earlier in this work, albeit without attribution (*Affect. dignot.* 5.10).

Like Galen, Porphyry mentions not only one, but two times during the day set aside by Pythagoras to be used for introspection, namely, before one gets up in the morning, and before one falls asleep at night. For the latter he quotes *GV* 40–42, but, inter-

¹⁵ The importance of psychagogy in Hellenistic philosophy in general and the *Golden Verses* in particular will be discussed in chap. 7.

¹⁶ Cobet also takes παραινέσεις as a reference to the *Golden Verses* ("Ad Galenum," 240–41).

estingly enough, he also quotes two verses for the former:

πρῶτα μὲν ἐξ ὕπνου μελίφρονος ἐξυπαναστὰς
εὖ μάλ' ὀπιπεύειν ὅς' ἐν ἡματι ἔργα τελέσειεις.

When you first rise from sweet sleep,
consider very well which deeds you will perform during the day.
(Porphyry *VP* 40)

These two verses also occur after *GV* 39 in *codex Monacensis* 490 and in *codex Upsaliensis* 21, and a scholiast in Porphyry *ad locum* asserts, "All these precepts occur in the *Golden Verses*." Nauck suspects that a "learned reader" inserted them into the *Golden Verses* from Porphyry.¹⁷ Other witnesses also know of a morning or an evening session of reflection, or both, without reference to the *Golden Verses* (or *GV* 40–44), however.¹⁸

According to Diogenes, Pythagoras taught his disciples to recite *GV* 42 every time they entered their homes (λέγεται παρ-εγγυᾶν αὐτὸν [sc. Pythagoras] ἐκάστοτε τοῖς μαθηταῖς τάδε λέγειν εἰς τὸν οἶκον εἰσιούσι. [*GV* 42]; Diogenes Laertius 8.22). This context apparently differs from that of the *Golden Verses*, unless we take οἶκον as 'bedroom.'¹⁹

Let us review the evidence thus far. It is improbable that Cato's testimony depends directly on the *Golden Verses*. Seneca may be an indirect witness for the existence of *GV* 40–44, since his account of Sextius' practice closely approximates the content and form of these verses. The testimonies of Plutarch, Epictetus, Clement, and Origen are all in agreement with the context in which *GV* 40–44 occur in the *Golden Verses*. Diogenes Laertius' testimony indicates that at least *GV* 42 may have been used independently from its present context in the *Golden Verses*. Galen very likely refers to the *Golden Verses* as a whole, since the context in

¹⁷ Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 230. Mullach considers the verses authentic: "some Pythagorean" later deleted them because he thought they were spurious—on what grounds Mullach does not inform us (*FPG* 1.411 = *Hieroclis commentarius*, xiii).

¹⁸ Diodorus 10.5.1 and Iamblichus *VP* 165 (memory training in the morning); Apollonius ap. Iamblichus *VP* 256 and Jerome c. *Rufin.* 3.39.47–49 (moral reflection in the morning and evening). Apollonius' account here has been claimed for Timaeus of Tauromenium (4th–3d century BC) by Delatte (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 9; idem, ed., *La vie de Pythagore de Diogène Laërce* [Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques 2/17/2; Brussels: Lamertin, 1922] 196) and others; see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 104 n. 37.

¹⁹ Thus, seemingly, Burkert, who cites Diogenes' testimony as a reference to an evening session of self-examination (*Lore and Science*, 213 n. 19).

which he alludes to “those ... exhortations” fits the psychagogic function of the poem very well. Porphyry’s extra two verses present a problem. It is unlikely that the author of the *Golden Verses* would deliberately have left them out if he did find them in a source. They were probably created later (perhaps by Porphyry himself) to complement the *Golden Verses*.

The remaining testimonia are all by Plutarch or Pseudo-Plutarch. *GV* 7–8 are alluded to as a Pythagorean exhortation (παραινεσις) regarding friendship: καὶ γὰρ ἡ τῶν Πυθαγορείων παραινεσις οὐχ ὅτι προτέρους ἀμαρτάνειν εἰς φίλον διακωλύσειεν ἄν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἀμαρτήματα τοῦ φίλου πρῶτως φέρειν, ἕως ἂν δυνώμεθα, παρακελεύεται (“Indeed, the advice of the Pythagoreans would not merely prevent us from being the first to wrong a friend, but also encourages us to bear patiently the friend’s faults, as long as we can”);²⁰ *GV* 17–18 are simply cited as Pythagorean advice or exhortations (*Consol. ad Apoll.* 29.116e; *Vit. Hom.* 153).

To conclude our discussion of the testimonia: We can with certainty fix the terminus ante quem at ca. AD 200 (the time of Alciphron), and perhaps even earlier, say AD 150, if Galen knew the *Golden Verses*—and if he knew it, why not the earlier authors, namely, Seneca, Plutarch, and Epictetus, as well? A considerably earlier date is quite probable, however, since we have found no conclusive evidence thus far against Chrysippus’ knowing the *Golden Verses*, which would imply a terminus ante quem of ca. 300–250 BC at the latest.

2 Linguistic and Stylistic Evidence

Nauck is convinced that the linguistic and stylistic evidence points to a late date for the *Golden Verses*.²¹ The use of such evidence for the purpose of dating a text is notoriously problematic, however, and we find widely differing interpretations as far as the *Golden Verses* is concerned.²²

²⁰ Frg. 86, trans. F. H. Sandbach, LCL. Cf., however, also n. 5 above.

²¹ Nauck, “De aureo carmine,” 208–13, 223–24.

²² Zeller is of the opinion that Nauck “auch da und dort mit dem Vorwurf der Ungereintheit gegen das Gedicht allzu rasch [vorgeht]” (*Philosophie der Griechen* 1.378 n. 3); cf. also *ibid.*, 3.2.116 n. 3: “Das goldene Gedicht ..., über dessen Abfassungszeit die Ansichten zwar noch weit auseinandergehen, [können] wir aber nicht zu spät ansetzen....” Mullach admits that the author of the *Golden Verses* was no great poet, but does not think

A first point of criticism has been the meter and prosody. We find a glaring hiatus in *GV* 53 (ὥστε σε μήτε ἄελπτ' ἐλπίζειν μήτε τι λήθειν);²³ a breach of Hermann's Bridge in *GV* 6 (πράεσι δ' εἴκε λόγιοις ἔργοισι τ' | ἐπωφελίμοισι), 37 (μὴ δαπανᾶν παρὰ καιρὸν ὅποια | καλῶν ἀδοτήμων), and 70 (ἦν δ' ἀπολείψας σῶμα ἐς αἰθέρ' | ἐλεύθερον ἔλθης);²⁴ and the very unusual occurrence of four contracted *bicipitia* in *GV* 10 (γαστρὸς μὲν πρῶτιστα καὶ ὕπνου λαγνείης τε).²⁵ According to Nauck, criticism of *GV* 32 (οὐ δ' ὑγιείας τῆς περὶ σῶμ' ἀμέλειαν ἔχειν χρή) is too extensive to be brought under one head (*non uno nomine improbandus est*).²⁶

Granting the criticism against the versification, the question remains what to make of it. Although we may perhaps expect to find more mistakes in later poets, even earlier didactic poets like Parmenides did not turn out faultless meter.²⁷ On the other hand, many Hellenistic and imperial epic poets were very conscious of metrical 'laws'; most of the breaches of these laws appear in religious poems like the Orphic Hymns and *Argonautica*.²⁸ Meter is therefore not a very reliable guide to dating 'non-literary' works such as philosophical or religious poems.

Of apparently greater importance is the lexical evidence for a later date.²⁹ *ἐπωφελίμοισι* (*GV* 6) seems to be a *hapax legomenon*,³⁰ which in itself, of course, does not necessitate a late date. The related compound adjective *ἐπωφελής* does not appear before

that the internal evidence speaks against an early date (*Hieroclis commentarius*, xii, xiv). See also n. 1 above.

²³ Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 208; cf. already Ricardus Volkmann, *Commentationes epicae* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1854) 33; Cobet, *Collectanea critica*, 468.

²⁴ Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 208. Hermann's Bridge entails that the fourth *biceps* of a hexameter be undivided; see M. L. West, *Greek Metre* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982) 37–38.

²⁵ West, *Greek Metre*, 178 n. 47.

²⁶ Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 208.

²⁷ Cf. Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 47, who refers to Hermann Diels, *Parmenides Lehrgedicht* (Berlin: Reimer, 1897) 4–5, 22–23; cf. also recently Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides: A Study of Word, Image, and Argument in the Fragments* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) 2, 34–37, 264–68. It is interesting to note that the single most frequent 'mistake' in Parmenides' verses is a breach of Hermann's Bridge; see *ibid.*, 267. Even in antiquity there were hypercritical readers who criticized "Parmenides for his versification, Phocylides as commonplace," etc. (Plutarch *Mor.* 45b).

²⁸ See West, *Greek Metre*, 152–57, 177–80.

²⁹ Cf. Cobet, *Collectanea critica*, 464–69; Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 208–9.

³⁰ Cf. LSJ, s.v. ἐπωφέλιμος; *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae CD ROM #D* (Irvine: Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, University of California Irvine, 1992), 'Index,' s.v. ἐπωφέλιμ*.

the imperial period,³¹ but the simplex ὠφέλιμος was in use as early as the 5th century BC.³² On the other hand, other compounds such as ἐπωφέλεια, ἐπωφελέω, and ἐπωφέλημα were also commonly used in the 5th century,³³ so that one should probably not make too much of the simplex-compound contrast. εἰθίζομαι (GV 9, 35) also appears only in the *Golden Verses*, where the lengthened form (instead of the usual ἐθίζομαι) is used *metri causa*.³⁴ κτᾶσθαι as a passive (GV 16) is unusual; the lexica give no examples of the present of κτάομαι with a passive meaning, but there is an instance in Cassius Dio (2d/3d century AD): διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων καὶ κτᾶται τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ σώζεται (“By the same practices the good is both acquired and preserved”).³⁵ The active ἐξακέσας (GV 66) would also be unusual at an early date, the normal form being middle. The only other known example is in Marcellus of Side (a physician and poet from the time of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius).³⁶ The active simplex is already used by Hippocrates, however.³⁷ The use of the sigmatic aorist ἀπολείψας (GV 70) instead of the second aorist form ἀπολίπων is also taken as an indication of a late date.³⁸ LSJ cite only Pseudo-Phocylides 77 (between 50 BC and AD 100?)³⁹ and Themistius *Orationes* 25.310d (a contemporary of the emperor Julian), but sigmatic aorists of ἀπολείπω are also found in Aristophanes of Byzantium’s *Historiae animalium epitome* 2.516.2 (ca. 257–180 BC); the *History of Alexander the Great* recensio α 3.32.15 (1st century BC?); LXX Judges (codex Vaticanus) 9:9, 13; and an epigram by Philodemus (d. 40/35 BC) in the *Greek Anthology* (11.44.3). Before the late Hellenistic period, the sigmatic aorist of the simplex λείπω occurs once in Euripides, and there

³¹ The earliest example is Pollux 5.136 (2d century AD); cf. LSJ, s.v. ἐπωφελής.

³² Cf. Thucydides 2.46; Euripides *Ion* 138; Plato *Resp.* 607d.

³³ Cf. LSJ, s.vv. ἐπωφέλεια, ἐπωφελέω, ἐπωφέλημα.

³⁴ Cf. LSJ, s.v. εἰθίζω: “poet. for ἐθίζω.”

³⁵ Cassius Dio 38.38.3; cited by Mullach as 38.39 (*Hieroclis commentarius*, 5). Mullach himself, however, argues that κτᾶσθαι in the *Golden Verses* can be read as a middle—which creates more problems than it solves (*Hieroclis commentarius*, xii–xiii, 5–6). See the commentary on GV 16 below.

³⁶ Marcellus of Side *De piscibus* 98; cf. Nauck, “De aureo carmine,” 209. LSJ only cite GV 66 for the active form ἐξακέω.

³⁷ Hippocrates *Περὶ τόπων τῶν κατὰ ἄνθρωπον* 10; cf. LSJ, s.v. ἀκέομαι III.

³⁸ Cf. LSJ, s.v. ἀπολείπω.

³⁹ See P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (SVTP 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 81–82.

is one uncertain instance in Antiphanes (4th century BC).⁴⁰ Delatte, however, finds no problem in accounting for the occurrence of ἀπολείψας in what he considers to be a fragment of a 5th-century Ἱερὸς λόγος: “J’y [sc. ἀπολείψας] verrais plutôt un de ces provincialismes qui ne sont pas rares dans la littérature religieuse.”⁴¹

κτᾶσθαι and ἐξακέσας thus seem to point to the 2d century AD, although ἀπολείψας may already have been in use a few centuries earlier. However, it is important to keep the defective nature of our sources in mind as far as lexical data is concerned: since the greater part of the corpus of Hellenistic writings is lost, it would be presumptuous to draw too definite a conclusion from the non-occurrence of a specific form in this period.⁴² At the most, the lexical data would appear to preclude a pre-Hellenistic date.

3 Doctrinal Evidence

The doctrines and ideas expressed in the *Golden Verses* at best provide us with very vague parameters for the date. At the upper limit, the absence of Neoplatonic ideas confirms the testimony of Alciphron that the poem has come into existence before the 3d century AD.⁴³ What concerns us here is rather to determine a lower limit. Unfortunately, since the greater part of the *Golden Verses* is expressed in a simple, rather unsophisticated manner, we find very little technical terminology that would help us to pinpoint a terminus. The greater part of the poem is based on popular wisdom traditions, which of their very nature are of an indeterminate age, since they do not reflect a particular philosophical position. On the whole the poem with its emphasis on moderation

⁴⁰ Euripides *Alc.* 1015; Antiphanes frg. 32 Kock = Aristophanes frg. 965 Kock; cf. also LSJ, s.v. λείπω. This fragment is not included in the most recent edition of the Aristophanic fragments (R. Kassel and C. Austin, eds., *Poetae Comici Graeci* 3.2 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984]).

⁴¹ Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 77 n. 2. Ziegler considers ἀπολείψας the only serious obstacle in the way of an early date, and suggests an emendation to ἀπαμείψας, the simplex of which is found in Sophocles *Phil.* 1262 (*Geschichte der Ethik* 1.256 n. 51). “Nicht zulässig,” is Zeller’s laconic comment (*Philosophie der Griechen* 1.379 n. 3).

⁴² Cf. Burkert’s comment on L. Delatte’s attempt to date the Pseudopythagorean treatises on kingship on the basis of linguistic data: “Die von Delatte gesammelten sprachlichen Indizien sind, wegen des Verlusts fast der ganzen hellenistischen Literatur, kaum beweiskräftig” (“Zur geistesgeschichtlichen Einordnung,” 48 n. 3; my emphasis).

⁴³ Cf. also Capellina, “Delle dottrine dell’ antica scuola pitagorica,” 53–54, who refers to “la semplicità veramente antica di questi versi”; Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 1.379n.

favors an Academic-Peripatetic metriopathetic approach rather than a Stoic apathetic position, but that is also characteristic of most wisdom texts. Still, an attempt will be made to date some of the ideas cursorily. The reader is referred to the commentary later in the book for a more detailed discussion and for the supporting evidence.

The interpretation of *καταχθονίους δαίμονας* (GV 4) as 'souls of the dead,' if correct, would support a Hellenistic date, since the worship of the deceased became more common in this period. GV 9–20 are apparently based on a schema of cardinal virtues, which first became known in the works of Plato. The ideas of a personal moral conscience (GV 11–12), the 'healing' of anger (GV 17–19), *ataraxia* (GV 26–39), and *ἀρετή* as moral virtue (GV 46) can all be traced back to Democritus (ca. 460–370 BC). The personification of virtue already occurs with Prodicus (fl. 431/421 BC). Self-examination (GV 27–44) was also practiced by Epicureans and Stoics, but there is no evidence that they were the first to do so.

As we have seen above, GV 47–48a are based on an independent Pythagorean oath, which in the extant, couplet form must be dated not before the middle of the 5th century BC. It is quite unlikely that this oath depends on the *Golden Verses*, since it would be difficult to explain why the positive *ναί* in GV 47 would have been changed to the negative *οὐ* we find in the oath. On the other hand, it makes perfect sense for the author of the *Golden Verses* to change the negative form to fit the context in the poem.

The problematic notion of the *σύστασις* ('underlying essence') of gods and humans which pervades and rules everything (GV 50–51)—if this is indeed the correct interpretation—may indicate Stoic influence, but the terminology differs so much from Stoic usage that I would suggest it derives from Pythagorean circles. Likewise, although the idea of the universal interrelatedness of all things may seem Stoic, a formulation very similar to that in GV 52 is already found in Plato *Meno* 81d.

That humans are responsible for their own suffering (GV 54) is an ancient concept, but the specific term used, namely, *αὐθαίρετα*, is first found in this context in the 5th century BC (e.g., in Bacchylides, Sophocles, and Euripides). The thought and formulation of GV 54–56 are Orphic, but it may ultimately go back to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (see below). The term *κύλινδρος* (GV 57) is not used before Democritus (frg. 155 DK), Archytas (DK 47A14) (first half of 4th century BC), and Aristotle, although they

used it in its more common mathematical meaning as ‘cylinder.’ The phraseology in *GV* 63 and 71 is reminiscent of the 4th-century Gold Leaves, but the notion of kinship between gods and humans is of course much older than this. The personification of Nature as hierophant (*GV* 64) already occurs in Plato. ἐξακέσας in *GV* 66 may be related to the Orphic *terminus technicus* ἐξακέσεις (‘healings’) (cf. Orpheus A11 DK); the two titles mentioned in *GV* 67–68, Καθαρμοί and Λύσις ψυχῆς, also have an Orphic ring. The faculty of judgment as charioteer (*GV* 69) reminds us of Plato. The αἰθήρ (*GV* 70) is known as abode of souls of the dead since the 5th century BC.

The second half of the final sentence, ἔσσεαι ἀθάνατος, θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός (“You will be immortal, *an undying god, no longer mortal*,” *GV* 71), is a quotation of Empedocles’ claim ἐγὼ δ’ ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός / πωλεῦμαι (“I tell you I travel up and down as *an immortal god, mortal no longer*”).⁴⁴ It is clear that the Empedocles passage is the original, and not vice versa: *GV* 71b is simply a repetition of the first half of the sentence (“You will be immortal”) and can easily be explained as a quotation of a well-known passage to support the author’s own statement.⁴⁵ The fact that the *Golden Verses* lacks any reference to metempsychosis may be an indication that it belongs to the later Pythagorean tradition.⁴⁶

The doctrinal evidence, such as it is, thus favors a post-Platonic date, but it does not rule out a date before the time of Chrysippus.

4 The Golden Verses and Other Texts

Possible genealogical relationships between the *Golden Verses* and a few other texts may also have a bearing on the dating of the poem. Parallels between Cleanthes’ *Hymn to Zeus* (= *SVF* 1.537) and especially *GV* 55–56 indicate that the one is imitating the other, or that both perhaps depend on a third text.⁴⁷ Compare

⁴⁴ Empedocles frg. 102.4–5 Wright = DK 31B112.4–5; trans. M. R. Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 264.

⁴⁵ See Wright, *Empedocles*, 134, for other ancient authors citing this passage.

⁴⁶ Cf. Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 123–24.

⁴⁷ This was first pointed out by G[uilielmus] V[ollgraff] (“Ad Carmen aureum,” *Mnemosyne* 60 [1932] 435) and discussed in some detail by Dragona-Monachou in his article “Ο “Ἕμνος σὺν Δία’ καὶ τὰ Χρῶσα Ἐπη.” The *Hymn* is edited with translation by Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers* 1.326–27, 2.326–27 (frg. 54I). I have used their text

verses 23–25 of the *Hymn to Zeus* with GV 55–56:

δύσμοροι, οἳ τ' ἀγαθῶν μὲν ἀεὶ κτῆσιν ποθέοντες
οὔτ' ἐσορῶσι θεοῦ κοινὸν νόμον, οὔτε κλύουσιν,
ὧ̑ κεν πειθόμενοι σὺν νῶ̑ βίον ἐσθλὸν ἔχοιεν.

*the wretched people, who ever yearn for the possession of good things
yet neither see nor hear god's universal law,
by obeying which they could lead a good life in partnership with in-
telligence.*

(*Hymn to Zeus* 23–25)

τλήμονας, οὔτ' ἀγαθῶν πέλας ὄντων οὔτ' ἐσορῶσιν
οὔτε κλύουσι, λύσιν δὲ κακῶν παῦροι συνιᾶσιν.

*the wretched people, who do not see the good even though it is near,
nor do they hear it. Few understand the deliverance from their troubles.*

(GV 55–56)

The verbal agreements and parallels (δύσμοροι/τλήμονας, οἳ τ' ἀγαθῶν ... οὔτ' ἐσορῶσι ... οὔτε κλύουσιν) become all the more impressive in the light of other correspondences here and further on in the two poems. In the verses quoted we notice the similarity between “god's *universal law*” and the *proximity* of the good. Both passages also consider *understanding* to be the solution. Next we may compare verses 26–27 and 30–31 of the *Hymn to Zeus* with GV 57–60a:

αὐτοὶ δ' αὖθ' ὁρμῶσιν ἄνοι κακὸν ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλο,
οἳ μὲν ὑπὲρ δόξης σπουδὴν δυσέριστον ἔχοντες,
.....
<ἀλλὰ κακοῖς ἐπέκυρσαν> ἐπ' ἄλλοτε δ' ἄλλα φέρονται,
σπεύδοντες μάλα πάμπαν ἐναντία τῶνδε γενέσθαι.

ἀλλὰ κακοῖς ἐπέκυρσαν suppl. Arnim ὥστε κύλινδροι δῆθεν conj. Vollgraff

Devoid of intelligence, they rush into *this evil or that*,
some in their *belligerent* quest for fame,

.....
<But all that they achieve is evils,> despite *travelling hither and
thither*
in burning quest of the opposite.

(*Hymn to Zeus* 26–27, 30–31)

and translation (the latter slightly adapted in places).

τοίη μοῖρ' αὐτῶν βλάπτει φρένας· ὥς δὲ κύλινδροι
 ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλα φέρονται ἀπείρονα πῆματ' ἔχοντες.
 λυγρὰ γὰρ συνοπαδὸς Ἔρις βλάπτουσα λέληθεν
 σύμφυτος.

Such is the fate that harms their minds: like tumbling stones
they are borne hither and thither, suffering endless miseries.
 For a deadly innate companion, *Discord*, has injured them
 unawares.

(GV 57–60a)

If Vollgraff's conjecture for the lacuna in *Hymn to Zeus* 30 is accepted, the correspondence between it and the *Golden Verses* is even more pronounced.⁴⁸

Likewise, verses 32–35 of the *Hymn to Zeus* express ideas very similar to GV 61–62:

ἀλλὰ Ζεῦ πάνδωρε, ...
 ἀνθρώπους ρύου <μὲν> ἀπειροσύνης ἀπὸ λυγρῆς,
 ἦν σύ, πάτερ, σκέδασον ψυχῆς ἄπο, δὸς δὲ κυρῆσαι
 γνώμης, ἧ πίσυνος σὺ δίκης μέτα πάντα κυβερνᾷς ...

Bountiful *Zeus*, ...
protect mankind from its pitiful incompetence.
 Scatter this from our soul, *Father*. *Let us achieve*
the power of judgement by trusting in which you steer all things with
 justice ...

(*Hymn to Zeus* 32–35)

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἧ πολλῶν γε κακῶν λύσειας ἅπαντας,
 εἰ πᾶσιν δείξαις, οἷψ τῷ δαίμονι χρώνται.

Father Zeus, you would surely deliver all from many evils,
if you would show all what kind of daimon they have.

(GV 61–62)

In GV 69 there is also a reference to the “*the faculty of judgment*” that should be put “in control as *charioteer*” (ἡνίοχον γνώμην στήσας καθύπερθεν ἀρίστην). Compare also ἀπείρονα πῆματ' ... λυγρὰ Ἔρις (GV 57–58) and ἀπειροσύνης λυγρῆς (*Hymn to Zeus*

⁴⁸ Guilielmus Vollgraff, “De lapide cylindro,” *Mnemosyne* 52 (1924) 208 n. 2. His suggestion was rejected by Wilamowitz (*Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos* [2 vols.; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1924] 2.324–25) and has consequently been ignored by subsequent editors. See most recently Kurt Sier, “Zum Zeushymnos des Kleantes,” in *Beiträge zur hellenistischen Literatur und ihrer Rezeption in Rom* (ed. Peter Steinmetz; Palingenesia 28; Stuttgart: Steiner, 1990) 93–108.

33). Finally, we may point to ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γενός ἐσμέν (“for we are your offspring”; *Hymn to Zeus* 4) and ἐπεὶ θεῖον γένος ἐστὶ βροτοῖσιν (“for mortals have a divine origin”; *GV* 63).⁴⁹ Apart from the verbal and conceptual parallels we also notice a definite correspondence in the sequence of ideas between *GV* 55–62 and *Hymn to Zeus* 23–35.

How do we explain these similarities? Vollgraff simply asserts that the author of the *Golden Verses* used the *Hymn to Zeus* as a source,⁵⁰ but Dragona-Monachou considers three possible explanations for the similarities between the two texts: (a) the similarities can be explained as typical elements of hymns and *ἱεροὶ λόγοι* (sacred texts), (b) the one poem may be an imitation of the other, or (c) they may both be based on a common source.⁵¹ He finds (a) an inadequate explanation and rejects (b), mainly because Cleanthes could not have imitated the much later *Golden Verses*, and imitation in the other direction does not appear very plausible.⁵² He therefore proposes the third explanation, postulating Delatte’s hypothetical Pythagorean Ἱερὸς λόγος as source used by both authors.⁵³

In order to decide the matter, it is necessary to consider a few other texts that also exhibit similarities with *GV* 55–56. As has frequently been observed, there is a marked similarity between these verses and Orphic fragment 233 Kern:

θῆρές τε οἰωνοί τε βροτῶν τ’ ἀετώσια φύλα,
 ἄχθεα γῆς, εἰδῶλα τετυγμένα, μηδαμὰ μηδὲν
 εἰδότες, οὔτε κακοῖο προσερχομένοιο νοῆσαι
 φράδμονες, οὔτ’ ἀποθεν μάλ’ ἀποστρέψαι κακότητος
 οὔτ’ ἀγαθοῦ παρεόντος ἐπιστρέψαι <τε> καὶ ἔρξαι
 ἴδριες, ἀλλὰ μάτην ἀδαήμονες, ἀπρονόητοι.

Beasts and birds and sinful tribes of mortals, burdens to the earth,
 counterfeit images, *knowing no single thing, without wit to perceive the
 approach of evil, nor to avert disaster from afar, nor skilled when good*

⁴⁹ The text of *Hymn to Zeus* 4 is corrupt, but the meaning of the first half of the verse is certain. Dragona-Monachou finds other, less obvious, parallels as well; compare, e.g., *Hymn to Zeus* 4, 8–9, and 17, with *GV* 51, 54 (“Ἵμνος στὸ Δία,” 343, 355–75).

⁵⁰ Vollgraff, “Ad Carmen aureum,” 435.

⁵¹ Dragona-Monachou, “Ἵμνος στὸ Δία,” 343–44.

⁵² Ibid., 344–46; 346–50, esp. 348: “An imitation by the compiler of the *Golden Verses* of Cleanthes, whom we consider the older, does not appear to us very plausible” (my translation). Dragona-Monachou does not expand on this statement.

⁵³ Ibid., 350–55.

is at hand to repent and make it yours, but vain and foolish and improvident.⁵⁴

Lines 3–6 have several points in common with the *Golden Verses*: we find the repetition of οὔτε in both, both contain an awkward genitive absolute construction (ἀγαθῶν πέλας ὄντων, *GV* 55; ἀγαθοῦ παρεόντος, Orphic frg. 233.5), both refer to good as well as evil, both emphasize the lack of insight. Very similar too are the following lines from an Orphic papyrus from the 2d or 1st century BC:

ἄφρονες ἄνθρωποι, δυστήμονες
οὔτε κακοῖο ὕμνιν ἐπερχομένου προγνώμονες οὔτ' ἀ-
γαθοῖο.

Foolish, wretched human beings,
unable to discern beforehand when evil or good is approaching
you.⁵⁵

This passage also shares the notion of *wretchedness* with the *Golden Verses*. Both Orphic texts are apparently imitations of *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 256–57 (7th or 6th century BC):

νήϊδες ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀφράδμονες οὔτ' ἀγαθοῖο
αἴσαν ἐπερχομένου προγνώμεναι οὔτε κακοῖο.

Ignorant and senseless human beings, unable to foresee
the allotted share of coming good or evil.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Trans. W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement* (London: Methuen, 1935) 142. For the connection with the *Golden Verses*, see Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* (2d ed., 1898; 2 vols.; reprint, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991) 2.124 n. 2: "Wohl den orphischen Versen ... nachgeahmt sind die Verse des *carmen aureum* 55ff."; Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 65; Otto Kern, ed., *Orphicorum fragmenta* (1922; reprint, Dublin: Weidmann, 1972) 247; van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 42; Dragona-Monachou, "Ἔμνος στὸ Δία," 359–60. Although the Orphic *Rhapsodies* to which Kern assigns this fragment are only preserved as quotations by late Neoplatonists, Martin West has recently argued that they were compiled from earlier Orphic theogonies and have been in circulation from soon after 100 BC (*The Orphic Poems* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1983] 229–51). He further points out that "there is nothing in the fragments of the *Rhapsodies* which is evidently post-Hellenistic on grounds of metre, prosody, style, or philosophical or religious content" (ibid., 229). Some of the material they contain may be as early as the 6th or 5th century BC. See Konrat Ziegler, "Orphische Dichtung," *PW* 18.2 (1942) 1341–1417, esp. 1362–66; idem, "Orphische Dichtung," *Kl. Pauly* 4.356–62; in general also Kern, *Orphicorum fragmenta*, 140–43; Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, chap. 4; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) 296–99.

⁵⁵ Orphic frg. 49.95–97 Kern = DK 1B15a, p. 14.21–22.

⁵⁶ On this passage and its relationship to the two Orphic fragments, see N. J.

The latter passage shares all the similarities in the passages mentioned above, except the genitive absolute.⁵⁷ This construction in the other passages is obviously the result of a (deliberate?) omission of an object like αἴσαν. It is clear that the *Golden Verses* follows a tradition, even though it would be difficult to prove a direct dependence between it and any of the other three texts.

Returning to the relationship between the *Golden Verses* and Cleanthes' *Hymn*, I agree with Dragona-Monachou, against Vollgraff, that the author of the *Golden Verses* could not have imitated the *Hymn to Zeus*. In the first place, it is inconceivable that the author of the *Golden Verses* would have been able to remove all the fairly sophisticated Stoic elements from his source and 'simplify' it into traditional and relatively straightforward statements such as we have in *GV* 55–56—the more so if the author was such a simple-minded compiler as the proponents of the compilation theory would have us believe. However, it is quite feasible for Cleanthes to have changed his source into a more complex Stoic text. Secondly, as we have seen, the *Golden Verses* shares a common tradition with the two Orphic texts which includes syntactical similarities not shared by the *Hymn to Zeus*. If the author of the *Golden Verses* were dependent on the *Hymn to Zeus* as well as on this 'Orphic' tradition, it would mean that he had to conflate the two to arrive at his own formulation—surely an unnecessary and unlikely complication.

Dragona-Monachou's argument against Cleanthes having imitated the *Golden Verses* rests solely upon the relative dating of the two texts, thus necessitating the postulation of a third text as common source. If, as I would argue, there are no cogent arguments against a Hellenistic dating for the *Golden Verses*, Cleanthes (331–232 BC) could well have known and used the *Golden Verses*, especially since his successor, Chrysippus, knew at least *GV* 54.⁵⁸

Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974) 66–67, 78, 243–45.

⁵⁷ It is not certain that οὔτε κακοῖο ὕμνῳ ἐπερχομένου ... οὔτ' ἀγαθοῖο in the second line of the Orphic papyrus is a genitive absolute; according to LSJ the genitive depends on the adjective προγνώμονες—see LSJ, s.v. προγνώμων. However, this adjective is a *hapax legomenon*, and a genitive absolute would make just as much sense. In any case, the genitive in the Orphic papyrus is not qualifying a noun, as is the case in the *Hymn to Demeter*.

⁵⁸ Dragona-Monachou has shown that Cleanthes often makes use of other poetic texts, including Orphic poems (“Τῦμος στὸ Δία,” 350–55).

This brings us back to the crucial testimony of Chrysippus, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Does the context in which Chrysippus quotes *GV* 54 perhaps reveal a familiarity with other parts of the *Golden Verses* as well? Chrysippus is discussing the problem of fate (or determinism) and free will; just before he quotes *GV* 54 he uses the simile of setting a ‘stone cylinder’ (*lapidem cylindrum*) into motion: fate provides the initial impulse to human action (the setting into motion of the stone), but continued actions are due to human beings’ own volition and inclinations (the roundness of the stone that enables it to roll):

“sicut” inquit “lapidem cylindrum si per spatia terrae prona atque derupta iacias, causam quidem ei et initium praecipitantiae feceris, mox tamen ille praeceps volvitur, non quia tu id iam facis, sed quoniam ita sese modus eius et forma volubilitas habet: sic ordo et ratio et necessitas fati genera ipsa et principia causarum movet, impetus vero consiliorum mentiumque nostrarum actionesque ipsas voluntas cuiusque propria et animorum ingenia moderantur.”

‘Just as’, he [sc. Chrysippus] says, ‘if you push a stone cylinder [or better: a boulder] on steeply sloping ground, you have produced the cause and beginning of its forward motion, but soon it rolls forward not because you are still making it do so, but because such are its form and smooth-rolling shape—so too the order, rationale and necessity of fate sets in motion the actual types of causes and their beginnings, but the deliberative impulses of our minds and our actual actions are controlled by our own individual will and intellect’.⁵⁹

A simile of rolling stones (κύλινδροι) also occurs in the *Golden Verses*, just a few lines after *GV* 54:

τοίη μοῖρ’ αὐτῶν βλάπτει φρένας· ὥς δὲ κύλινδροι
ἄλλοτ’ ἐπ’ ἄλλα φέρονται ἀπείρονα πῆματ’ ἔχοντες.

Such is the fate that harms their minds: like tumbling stones
they are borne hither and thither, suffering endless miseries.

(*GV* 57–58)

Gellius’ translation of κύλινδρον with *lapidem cylindrum* in the Chrysippus fragment is obviously a mistake: in Chrysippus as in

⁵⁹ Chrysippus ap. Gellius 7.2.11 = *SVF* 2.1000, p. 294.16–23; trans. Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers* 1.388 = frg. 62D4. Cf. also Chrysippus ap. Cicero *De fato* 39–44 = *SVF* 2.974. See on Chrysippus’ use of the simile Willy Theiler, “Tacitus und die antike Schicksalslehre,” in *Phyllobolia für Peter von der Mühl zum 60. Geburtstag am 1. August 1945*, by Olof Gigon et al. (Basel: Schwabe, 1946) 61–67; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 86.

the *Golden Verses* κύλινδρος means 'boulder,' as Vollgraff has shown.⁶⁰ Although Chrysippus' use of the simile differs from that in the *Golden Verses* (see the commentary *ad loc.* below), the fact that he uses it just before he cites *GV* 54 could be taken as an indication that he associated the two and that they both occurred in the Pythagorean text known to him. Compare also *GV* 57–58 with what Chrysippus says a few sentences earlier in the same fragment of the effect of fate on the ignorant, keeping in mind that *GV* 57–58 follow on a condemnation in the previous verses of those without insight:

nam si [sc. ingenia] sunt per naturam primitus salubriter utiliterque ficta, omnem illam uim quae de fato extrinsecus ingruit inoffensius tractabiliusque transmittunt. sin vero sunt aspera et inscita et rudia nullisque artium bonarum adminiculis fulta, etiamsi parvo sive nullo fatalis incommodi conflictu urgeantur, sua tamen scaevitate et voluntario impetu assidua delicta et in errores se ruunt.

For if our minds' initial natural make-up is a healthy and beneficial one, all that external force exerted upon them as a result of fate slides over them fairly smoothly and without obstruction. *But if they are coarse, ignorant, inept, and unsupported by education, then even if they are under little or no pressure from fated disadvantages, they still, through their own ineptitude and voluntary impulse, plunge themselves into continual wrongdoings and transgressions.*⁶¹

Once again the question is whether the *Golden Verses* is based on Chrysippus, or vice versa. Theiler finds the κύλινδροι in the *Golden Verses* "völlig unverständlich," and suggests that the compiler of the *Golden Verses* got the simile as well as *GV* 54 (as a free-floating Pythagorean verse) from Chrysippus.⁶² Since the simile makes excellent sense in my view (see the commentary *ad loc.* below), I consider it much more likely that Chrysippus found it, together with *GV* 54, in the *Golden Verses* and adapted it for his own purpose. If the converse is true, it would mean that the author-compiler of the poem had to analyze Chrysippus in some detail to extract all the relevant ideas—a very unlikely scenario.

⁶⁰ Vollgraff, "De lapide cylindro," 207–11, who also refers to Apollonius Rhodius *Argon.* 2.594. See also LSJ, s.v. κύλινδρος 1; Hesychius, s.v. κύλινδροι: λίθοι στρογγύλοι.

⁶¹ Chrysippus ap. Gellius 7.2.8 = *SVF* 2.1000, p. 294.5–11; trans. Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers* 1.388 = frg. 62D2 (my emphasis).

⁶² Theiler, *Gnomon* 2 (1926) 146. Theiler is apparently unaware of Vollgraff's article on the κύλινδροι published two years earlier.

We conclude by looking at Delatte's hypothesis of a 5th-century 'Ιερὸς λόγος (*Sacred Discourse*) in hexameters as source for the *Golden Verses*.⁶³ Although this 'Ιερὸς λόγος is no longer extant, Delatte tries to reconstruct some of it from verses now contained in the *Golden Verses* as well as other verses cited by ancient authors. His point of departure is a testimony by Heraclides Lembus (2d century BC) according to which there existed a 'Ιερὸς λόγος attributed to Pythagoras which began as follows:

ὦ νέοι, ἀλλὰ σέβεσθε μεθ' ἡσυχίης τάδε πάντα·

Young men, show reverence in silence to all the following.

(ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.7)

Attractive as it may seem, this hypothesis is built on very shaky foundations: There is not a single testimonium that connects a verse from the *Golden Verses* with the 'Ιερὸς λόγος. Nevertheless, most of the verses Delatte assigns to the 'Ιερὸς λόγος come from the *Golden Verses*, namely, GV 1–3, 10–12, 15, 16, 17–20, 21–23a, 36, 37–38a, 40–44, 45–46, 49b–53, 54–60, 61–62, 63–66, 67–69, and 70–71, that is, about two-thirds of the poem.⁶⁴ His rationale in determining which verses belong to the 'Ιερὸς λόγος is more or less the following: if a verse can be shown to be in accordance with the evidence of witnesses such as Aristoxenus (fl. ca. 340 BC) and Timaeus of Tauromenium (4th–3d century BC) on what constituted early Pythagoreanism, it *ipso facto* comes from the 'Ιερὸς λόγος. Now there are several difficulties with this approach: (a) There is no consensus about which reports may be ascribed to these witnesses, and Delatte tends to be more liberal and less critical than more recent scholars. (b) Van der Horst has tried to demonstrate that the *Golden Verses* as a whole reflects early Pythagorean doctrine; if this is true, Delatte's criterion for distinguishing between older and more recent verses no longer applies.⁶⁵ (c) Even leaving the first two objections aside, the fact that the *doctrine* expressed in a specific verse is already found in early Pythagoreanism, is not sufficient proof of the antiquity of that *verse* itself.

In addition, he gathers about twenty other verses from widely disparate and somewhat dubious sources: quite a number of these

⁶³ Delatte, *Litterature pythagoricienne*, 3–79.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 46–79.

⁶⁵ Cf. van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, xxxii–xxxiii.

are not even attributed to the Pythagoreans, and only one is explicitly connected with the Ἱερὸς λόγος. Apart from one or two exceptions, the verses assigned to the Ἱερὸς λόγος from additional sources are only remotely related to the verses taken from the *Golden Verses*.⁶⁶

It is therefore not surprising that Delatte's reconstruction of the Ἱερὸς λόγος has only found qualified acceptance.⁶⁷ I would suggest that there is a connection between the *Golden Verses* and the Ἱερὸς λόγος, but not in the way Delatte proposes. On the one hand, as we shall see in chapter 7, the *Golden Verses* itself, in terms of its genre, may be seen as a kind of Ἱερὸς λόγος.⁶⁸ On the other hand, the testimony of Heraclides Lembus cited above *may well be to the Golden Verses*. The poem would follow very well on that verse (compare σέβεσθε with τίμα, σέβον, σέβε, and τίμα in *GV* 2–4), and the context, namely, of young men being instructed, also fits the *Golden Verses* perfectly. How do we account for the fact that this verse no longer forms the *incipit* of the *Golden Verses*? The fact that this verse gives a metatextual instruction about what to do with the following verses, may have led to its being seen as a description of the poem rather than an integral part, with the result that it fell away in the history of transmission. The testimony of Heraclides comes from his *Epitome of Sotion*; the statement concerning the Ἱερὸς λόγος thus probably derives from Sotion's Διαδοχαὶ τῶν φιλοσόφων ('Successions of Philosophers'), which is dated between 200 and 170 BC.

5 Conclusion

We have found no reason why Chrysippus' testimony should not be accepted for dating the *Golden Verses*; it is even probable that his predecessor, Cleanthes, knew the poem as well. This would give us a terminus ante quem of ca. 300 BC at the latest. The most definite evidence for a terminus post quem is the quotation from

⁶⁶ This may be determined at a glance by looking at the purported fragments of the Ἱερὸς λόγος brought together by Thesleff, although his collection only contains the most likely Pythagorean verses and excludes those verses attributed to Orphics and other non-Pythagoreans (*Pythagorean Texts*, 158–63).

⁶⁷ See chap. 1, n. 27 above. Theiler (*Gnomon* 2 [1926] 147–48) and Burkert (*Lore and Science*, 219–20) are most critical.

⁶⁸ As Delatte has also recognized (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 4).

Empedocles in *GV* 71, but the internal evidence on balance seems to require a post-Platonic, early Hellenistic date. I therefore suggest a date of ca. 350–300 BC.

CHAPTER SIX

COMPOSITION AND CONTENT

Although previous scholarship has emphasized the lack of coherence of the *Golden Verses*,¹ I am convinced that the *Golden Verses* manifests a fairly well-integrated compositional structure which is more than the product of a mere compilation of disparate sayings. This coherence is apparent on two levels: on the one hand we find a linear and logical progression from one saying or cluster to the next, and eventually from the first part of the poem to the second part; on the other hand there is also a basic thematic unity underlying the whole poem. Before we continue a discussion of the composition, however, it may be helpful first to give an outline of the poem.

1 *Outline of the Composition of the Golden Verses*

1-49a I. Precepts to be mastered

1-8 A. Relationships with other beings and persons

1-4 1. Vertical relationships

1-2a a) Precept concerning the worship of the immortal gods

(1) Manner:

1a (a) First of all

1b (b) As custom prescribes

2b b) Precept concerning the respect owed to one's oath

2c-3 c) Precept concerning the worship of other superior beings

2c (1) The noble heroes

3 (2) The spirits of the dead

3b (a) Manner: by performing the customary rites

¹ Van der Horst is a notable exception—he tries to demonstrate the compositional unity of the poem, but his analysis remains superficial and does not go beyond indicating the basic lines of development and a brief summary of the contents (*Vers d'or*, xxix-xxxii, xxxix).

- 4 d) Precept concerning the honor owed to one's family
- 4a (1) One's parents
- 4b (2) Their closest relatives
- 5-8 2. Horizontal relationships
- 5 a) Precept concerning the choice of friends
 - (1) Criterion: excellence in virtue
- 6-8a b) Precepts concerning a friend's actions
 - 6 (1) Positive actions
 - 6a (a) Words
 - 6b (b) Deeds
 - 7-8a (2) Negative actions
 - 7b (a) Qualification:
 - i) Trivial mistakes
 - 8a ii) According to one's ability
 - 8b c) Gnome concerning the relation between ability and necessity
- 9-49a B. Practicing virtue
- 9-20 1. The cardinal virtues
- 9 a) Summary commands concerning
 - 9a (1) The previous precepts: know them
 - 9b (2) The following precepts: master them
- 10-12 b) Precepts concerning *σωφροσύνη*
 - 10-11a (1) *ἐγκράτεια* regarding pleasures and passions
 - 10a (a) Qualification: first of all
 - (b) Enumeration of pleasures and passions:
 - 10a i) Eating
 - 10b ii) Sleep
 - 10c iii) Sex
 - 11a iv) Anger
 - 11b-12 (2) *αἰδώς*
 - 11b-12a (a) Negative precept to avoid shameful deeds
 - 11c i) Circumstances:
 - 12a 1) In public
 - 12b-c 2) In private
 - (b) Positive precept based on the criterion of self-respect
 - 12b i) Qualification: most of all
 - 13 c) Precept concerning *δικαιοσύνη*
 - 13b (1) In deed
 - 13c (2) In word
 - 14-16 d) Precepts concerning *φρόνησις*
 - 14 (1) Negative precept to avoid thoughtlessness
 - (a) Qualification: in any way
 - 15-16 (2) Positive precept to have insight into:

- 15b (a) Gnostic truth concerning the universality of death
- 16 (b) Gnostic truth concerning the instability of property
- 17–20 e) Precepts concerning ἀνδρεία
- 17–18b (1) Positive precept to practice καρτερία regarding:
- 17 (a) Sufferings
 - i) Reason: they are due to the divine workings of fate
- 18a (b) One's lot in general
- 18c (2) Negative precept entailing a warning against resentment
- 19a (3) Positive precept to heal anger
 - (a) Qualification: as far as possible
- 19b–20 (4) Positive precept to have the following insight
- 20 (5) Gnostic truth concerning the limitation of suffering
 - (a) Qualification: regarding the good
- 20 2. Moral insight and the power of speech
- 21–26 a) Statement concerning the variety of utterances
- 21–22a (1) Negative utterances
- (2) Positive utterances
- 22b–23a b) Negative precept entailing a warning against over-reaction
 - (1) Too positive a reaction
 - (2) Too negative a reaction
- 22b c) Positive precept concerning false doctrines
- 22c–23a (1) Condition: Enunciation of false doctrine
- 23b–24a (2) Action: Withdrawal
- 23b d) Summary command emphasizing obedience of the following precept
- 24a (1) Qualification: in every respect
- 24b e) Negative precept concerning the danger of persuasion
 - (1) Means of persuasion:
 - (a) Word
 - (b) Deed
 - (2) Object of persuasion:
 - (a) Action
 - (b) Speech
 - (3) Negative precept stating the criterion to apply involving moral insight
- 25–26 3. Deliberation and reflection
- 25 a) Deliberation on deeds and consequences
- 26a
- 26b
- 27–44
- 27–39

- 27–31
27 (1) *φρόνησις*
(a) Precept concerning deliberation before action
27b i) Object: to avoid folly
28 (b) Gnomonic confirmation concerning:
i) Action
ii) Speech
29 (c) Precept concerning the criterion for action
30–31a (d) Precepts regarding knowledge as prerequisite for action
30a i) Negative precept regarding action without knowledge
30b–31a ii) Positive precept regarding acquiring knowledge
31b iii) Promise of felicitous consequence
32–38 (2) *σωφροσύνη*
32–34 (a) Precepts concerning physical health
32 i) Negative precept regarding neglect
33–34a ii) Positive precept regarding due measure in:
1) Drink
2) Food
3) Physical exercises
34b iii) Gnomonic definition of due measure
35–36 (b) Precepts concerning a simple life style
35 i) Positive precept emphasizing a pure and robust way of life
36 ii) Negative precept stating the criterion to apply: avoidance of envy
37–38 (c) Precepts concerning spending money
37 i) Negative precept regarding inopportune spending
38a ii) Negative precept regarding stinginess
38b iii) Gnome concerning due measure
39 (3) *φρόνησις* (recapitulation)
39a (a) Precept concerning the criterion for action: what will not harm you
39b (b) Precept concerning deliberation before action
40–44 b) Reflection and self-examination
40–42 (1) Precepts concerning retrospection
40 (a) Negative precept not to rest
41 (b) Positive precept to examine deeds
42 (c) Threefold questioning
42a i) Test for transgression

- 42b ii) Test for achievement
- 42c iii) Test for negligence
- 43–44 (2) Precepts concerning self-evaluation
- 43 (a) Precept to survey the deeds done
- 44a (b) Negative evaluation: blame
- 44b (c) Positive evaluation: praise
- 45–49a 4. Summary commands to practice precepts
- 45 a) Threefold exhortation
- 45a (1) Exhortation to work on the precepts
- 45b (2) Exhortation to meditate on the precepts
- 45c (3) Exhortation to desire the precepts
- 46 b) Promise of approximation to Divine Virtue
- 47–48a c) Affirmation by oath
- 48b–49a d) Summary command
- 48b (1) To start working
- 49a (2) To pray for completion

- 49b–71 II. Ultimate goals and benefits

- 49b–64 A. Insight into metaphysical questions
- 49b 1. Condition for insight: mastering the precepts
- 50–51 2. Promise of insight into the essence of gods and human beings
- 51b a) Insight into its pervasiveness
- 51c b) Insight into how it rules everything
- 52–53 3. Promise of insight into nature
- 52b a) Affirmation that insight is allowed
- 52c b) Contents of insight: nature's homogeneity
- 53 c) Consequences of this insight:
- 53a (1) Not to have false expectations
- 53b (2) Not to lack awareness
- 54–60 4. Promise of insight into the causes of suffering
- 54 a) Cause: people's own choice
- 55–56 b) Cause: people's deficiencies
- 55b–56a (1) Their deficient perception of the good
- 55c (a) By perceiving it themselves
- 56a (b) By listening to others
- 55b (c) Aggravating circumstance: the accessibility of the good
- 56b (2) Their ignorance regarding the deliverance from evil
- 57–60 c) Explanation of this state of affairs
- 57a (1) The harmful influence of their fate
- 57b–58 (2) Simile describing their condition
- 59–60a (3) Reason: the harmful influence of Discord

- 60b–c (4) Warning against Discord
 60b (a) Negative precept not to promote Discord
 60c (b) Positive precept to avoid Discord
 61–62 5. Prayer to Zeus for deliverance from evil
 62 a) Condition: a revelation of the personal *δαίμων*
 63–64 6. Consolation based on assurances regarding
 63b a) The divine origin of man
 64 b) The initiation into the mysteries of nature
- 65–71 B. Conclusion
 65 1. Promise that the precepts will be mastered
 65a a) Condition: participation in the mysteries
 65c b) Means: a thorough cure
 66 2. Promise of deliverance from troubles
 67–69 3. Precept relating to both *σωφροσύνη* and *φρόνησις* concerning abstinence from certain foodstuffs
 67b–68a a) Qualification of foodstuffs: those named in two other works, viz.,
 67b (1) *Purifications*
 68a (2) *Deliverance of the Soul*
 68b–69 b) Qualification of abstinence:
 68b (1) By means of discernment and reflection
 69 (2) By appointing intelligence as guide
 70–71 4. Final eschatological promise of divine immortality
 70 a) Circumstances:
 70a (1) After departing from the body
 70b (2) On entering the free *αἰθήρ*
 71 b) Threefold repetition of the promised state:
 71a (1) Immortality
 71b (2) An undying god
 71c (3) No longer mortal

2 *Linear Development of the Golden Verses*

The poem may be divided into two main parts. The first (GV 1–49a) contains mainly precepts and is characterized by the predominance of imperatives. The second part (GV 49b–71) contains promises and indicates the ultimate goals; consequently, we find here indicatives rather than imperatives. The whole poem therefore exhibits a conditional structure on the macrolevel: “If you do what I command you in the first part, *then* you will have the benefits promised in the second part.”

Part I (GV 1–49a) sets out with a section dealing with our external relationships: first with beings and persons superior to us

(GV 1–4), then with people on our own level (GV 5–8). The former group is listed in a descending hierarchy (gods, heroes, *daimones*, parents, and relatives); the fitting attitude is that of piety. The determining relationship within the second group is friendship.

The next section contains precepts about the virtues to be mastered and practiced in order to advance towards spiritual maturity. It is by far the longest section (GV 9–49a) and constitutes the ethical core of the poem. It may in turn be divided into four subsections. The first of these is concerned with the four cardinal virtues: moderation (*σωφροσύνη*, GV 9b–12), justice (*δικαιοσύνη*, GV 13), moral insight (*φρόνησις*, GV 14–16), and moral courage (*ἀνδρεία*, GV 17–20). The next subsection (GV 21–26) formulates the correct criterion to apply towards persuasive discourse: avoid what is not the best for you. This is an application of moral insight. The third subsection focuses on two of the virtues in particular: moral insight and moderation. The first part (GV 27–39) deals with deliberation *before* action in order to avoid negative consequences, the second part (GV 40–44) with retrospection and self-evaluation *after* action. The final subsection (GV 45–49a) concludes Part I by exhorting the disciple to practice the precepts indicated in order to attain the desired state of virtue. As confirmation the author cites the well-known oath by Pythagoras, the discoverer of the *tetraktys*. The *tetraktys*, meaning something like ‘the unit of four,’ is a complex symbol for the Pythagorean insight into the mysteries of nature. As such it serves as a pivot in the transition to Part II of the poem, which refers to some of these secrets.

Part II (GV 49b–71) indicates the ultimate goals and benefits of the prescribed way of life. This part is considerably more complex than the first, mainly because it simply alludes to future insights and more advanced doctrines without explaining them. The first section (GV 50–64) enumerates insights that the disciple will gain: insight into the relationship between gods and human beings (GV 50–51), into nature (GV 52–53), and into the cause of suffering (GV 54–60). It concludes with a prayer to Zeus to reveal the personal *daimon* (GV 61–62) and with a consolation based on assurances of the divine origin of mankind and the possibility to participate in the mystery cult of Nature (GV 63–64). The concluding section (GV 65–71) contains final promises and commands. These commands again relate to *moderation* and *moral insight*. We also have a reference to two other texts of this sect, entitled the

Purifications and the *Deliverance of the Soul*. The final promise makes explicit what has only been hinted at thus far, namely, that the ultimate goal is an immortal and divine existence in the after-life.

3 *Underlying Theme*

The basic theme of the *Golden Verses* may be summarized in a word, namely, *insight*. Throughout the poem there is an emphasis on insight: In the first part of the poem it is a question of moral insight, insight into the moral implication of one's actions. The goal of this insight is an ability to avoid whatever obstructs the soul in its progress towards moral perfection. Although this insight has a purely practical application, it does not entail a specific content of knowledge; it involves, instead, a way of life, an attitude to action and to the practicalities of everyday living.

To be somewhat more specific, this moral insight comprises on the one hand an awareness of the existential parameters of the human condition and the limitations imposed thereby on human endeavor. In the first place, man is involved in various sets of relationships, towards the gods, towards family, and towards other people, all of which require a specific and proper response (GV 1–8). Man is also subject to physical desires and to irrational passions that have to be controlled if he wants to rise above the level of a bestial existence (GV 9–12). Thirdly, human beings have very little control over the circumstances that determine their life; death, in particular, is the ultimate limit that nobody can escape. Since the vicissitudes of life cannot be controlled, they have to be endured (GV 14–20). In the fourth place, man is exposed to the will and opinions of his fellow human beings; he has to find a *modus vivendi* to cope with the power of persuasion (GV 21–26). Man also has a body to care for; he has property to manage; in short, he has to define his own life style (GV 32–38).

On the other hand, moral insight entails a set of criteria to apply in everything one does, the underlying principle being whether a specific action contributes to the ultimate moral good of the agent or not (cf. GV 25–26, 27, 29, 31, 34, 39). This implies that action has to become conscious, deliberate, and rational. In order to attain this goal the agent has to accustom himself to constant deliberation before any action to ensure as far as possible a beneficial outcome (GV 27, 39); he also has to practice retrospec-

tion every evening to monitor his progress and to avoid committing the same mistakes again (*GV* 40–44). Control, practice, habituation, deliberation, and contemplation are therefore key words in this way of life (cf. *GV* 9, 13, 14, 19, 27, 35, 39, 40–45, 49, 65, 67–68).

Another kind of insight is promised in the second part of the poem, namely, insight into various metaphysical questions. This insight depends on progress in moral insight and it also has moral implications. The first question is that of the bond uniting gods and mortals (*GV* 50–51). The student will gain insight not only into the nature of this bond, but also into the way it pervades and controls every aspect of his life. The second question concerns the structure of Nature (*GV* 52–53). Insight will be gained into her interrelatedness and homogeneity. From this the student will be able to avoid false expectations; it will also enhance his awareness of what happens around him. The third and most important question for the author has to do with the cause of suffering (*GV* 54–60). Following a long tradition, including Plato, the author asserts that man is responsible for his own suffering; suffering is in fact 'self-chosen.' Unlike Plato, however, suffering is not traced back to a protological choice before incarnation, but is simply attributed to ignorance of the good and of the deliverance from evil. Ignorance causes one to be subject to an internal discord. Lacking firm criteria for making a rational choice between different options, human beings are thrown to and fro, and in the process they suffer injury like boulders tumbling down a steep incline without any control.

Since the cause of suffering is ignorance or lack of insight, the cure, as may be expected, is the insight advocated in the poem. In the first part of the poem, the student is commanded to endure suffering without resentment, because it is limited as far as good people are concerned (*GV* 17–20). The practice of the virtues enjoined in the first part also has a mainly preventative aim: to avoid what will distress and harm one (cf. *GV* 27, 29, 34, 36, 39). Here, in the second part, the insight into one's metaphysical status and one's position in nature is offered as an antidote to suffering (cf. *GV* 61–64), since such insight will enable one to avoid actions with negative consequences. At the end of the poem the author reiterates that participation in the secret insight provided by his sect will enable the student to perform certain required healings and to deliver the soul from suffering (*GV* 65–66). This process of deliv-

erance culminates in death, when the soul is free to return to its native *αἰθήρ* as a divine and immortal being (*GV* 70–71).

To summarize: the poem provides a program for living; its aim is to guide the reader to avoid the pitfalls of this life and to regain his rightful metaphysical status as kinsman of the gods. Its intention is thus ultimately a religious one.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GENRE, FUNCTION, AND SETTING

Even a superficial perusal of the *Golden Verses* will make it clear that the poem is a kind of gnomic text, that is, a text consisting of a collection of *γνῶμαι* and which generally speaking forms part of the wisdom tradition. However, it soon becomes clear that the poem intends to offer more than a loose collection of truisms; as we have seen in the previous chapter, the poem wants to inculcate a complete way of life that will eventually lead to immortality. We therefore need to consider more aspects of the poem's genre and function than just its gnomic character. Two other aspects that will be discussed here are the *Golden Verses* as a possible *ἐπὶ λόγος*, and the psychagogic function of the poem.

1 *Gnomic Literature*

Before discussing the Greek gnomic literature of the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman periods, a few distinctions are in order. Gnomic literature is related to, and not always readily distinguishable from, a number of other genres, such as wisdom literature, didactic poetry, and gnomologia.¹

The term 'wisdom literature' may be used for a macrogenre, but it is also often reserved for Ancient Near Eastern writings concerned with the art of living wisely.² The best known examples of this genre would be the Old Testament texts Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and the apocryphal texts Sirach and Wisdom of Solo-

¹ Cf., e.g., P. W. van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 77: "The poem of Ps-Phoc. has been called a Wisdom-poem, a didactic poem, and a gnomology (i.e. a collection of sentences, a *Spruchsammlung*). All these categorizations are equally right and equally wrong. Ps-Phoc. belongs to all these genres, but cannot be identified with one of them." Cf. also Klaus Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," *ANRW* II.25.2 (1984) 1045-46.

² In German scholarship, the term 'Weisheitsdichtung' is, however, also used for Greek material; cf., e.g., Karl Bielowlawek, *Hypothek und Gnome: Untersuchungen über die griechische Weisheitsdichtung der vorhellenistischen Zeit* (Philologus Supplement 32/3; Leipzig: Dieterich, 1940).

mon. Of these, texts such as Proverbs and Sirach, representing proverbial rather than speculative wisdom, are quite similar in terms of form and content to Greek gnomic and gnomological literature.

Didactic poetry is written in hexameters and purports to instruct the reader in a single subject of a scientific or pseudo-scientific nature.³ Hesiod's *Works and Days* (on agriculture) and *Theogony*, and Presocratic philosophical poems are early examples. Didactic poems were also popular in the Hellenistic and imperial periods; we find poems on such diverse topics as astronomy (Aratus and Manilius), agriculture (Virgil), philosophy (Lucretius), *ars poetica* (Horace), healing (Marcellus of Side), geography (Dionysius Periegetes), hunting and fishing (Oppian and Pseudo-Oppian), and poisons and poisonous animals (Nicander).⁴

Gnomic literature also aims at instruction, but not in one area of knowledge: its subject is life itself; its purpose to teach men to face the problems and opportunities of every day life with equanimity and restraint; its method the inculcation of maxims and moral precepts.⁵ A gnomic writing therefore consists of *γνώμαι* (*sententiae* in Latin), which are brief sayings relating to everyday living, expressing either a true or a desired state of affairs. *γνώμαι* can thus be descriptive (maxims) or prescriptive (precepts), although even descriptive *γνώμαι* usually have ethical implications.⁶ Gnomic literature occurs in both verse and prose

³ See Bernd Effe, *Dichtung und Lehre: Untersuchungen zur Typologie des antiken Lehrgedichts* (Zetemata 69; Munich: Beck, 1977) 9–23, esp. 21–23.

⁴ Effe, *Dichtung und Lehre*, discusses as many as twenty-nine authors. See also Michael von Albrecht, “Didaktische Poesie,” *Kl. Pauly* 2.4–5.

⁵ Cf. [Isocrates] *Demonic*. 12 (the introduction to the gnomic section, chaps. 13–43): “But it is not possible for the mind to be so disposed unless one is fraught with many noble maxims; for, as it is the nature of the body to be developed by appropriate exercises, it is the nature of the soul to be developed by moral precepts. Wherefore I shall endeavour to set before you concisely by what practices I think you can make the most progress toward virtue and win the highest repute in the eyes of all other men” (trans. George Norlin, LCL).

⁶ Cf. Aristotle *Rh.* 2.21.2: ἔστι δὲ γνώμη ἀπόφανσις, οὐ μέντοι περὶ τῶν καθ’ ἕκαστον, ... ἀλλὰ καθόλου· καὶ οὐ περὶ πάντων καθόλου, ... ἀλλὰ περὶ ὅσων αἱ πράξεις εἰσὶ, καὶ αἰρετὰ ἢ φευκτὰ ἔστι πρὸς τὸ πράττειν (“Now, a maxim is a statement, not however concerning particulars, ... but general; it does not even deal with all general things, ... but with the objects of human actions, and with what should be chosen or avoided with reference to them”; trans. J. H. Freese, LCL); *Auctor ad Herennium* 4.17.24: *Sententia est oratio sumpta de vita, quae aut quid sit aut quid esse oporteat in vita breviter ostendit* (“A maxim is an abbreviated saying about life, which briefly indicates either what is or what ought to be”); Hermogenes *Progygnasmata* 4: γνώμη ἐστὶ λόγος κεφαλαϊώδης ἐν ἀποφάνσει καθολικῇ, ἀποτρέπων τι ἢ προτρέπων ἐπὶ τι, ἢ ὁποῖον ἐστὶν ἕκαστον δηλῶν (“A maxim is a

form. An early example of the former is the poetry of Theognis, while the latter may be represented by Pseudo-Isocrates *Ad Demonicum* 13–43.

A gnomologium is also a collection of *γνώμαι*, and one may well wonder at the need for distinguishing it from a gnomic writing. The difference lies in the fact that, whereas the latter is written and composed as a gnomic text, a gnomologium is a collection of gnomic material culled from other texts or traditions, themselves not necessarily gnomic in nature (e.g., comic or tragic writings).⁷ This distinction, however, is often more a logical one than one that is empirically discernible. Thus scholars differ in opinion as to whether Epicurus' *Kyriai Doxai* should be considered an original composition (von den Mühl) or a collection of sayings taken from other writings (Usener).⁸ Likewise, when earlier scholarship considered the *Golden Verses* a mere collection, the implication was that it was a gnomologium rather than a gnomic poem. A gnomic writing itself may of course also include earlier, traditional material. A clear-cut example of a gnomologium would be the *Monostichic Sentences of Menander*. (In what follows I will use the term gnomic literature loosely to include gnomologia.)

Proverbial wisdom literature, gnomic literature, and gnomologia therefore share an interest in practical wisdom, while didactic poetry aims at more technical knowledge. They also differ in form: the former group usually consists of short, relatively independent sayings on diverse topics, while didactic poetry attempts to present a single theme by way of an integrated composition.⁹ In

summary saying by means of a general statement, which discourages something or encourages something, or which shows what an individual thing is"). *γνώμαι* were extensively discussed and classified by ancient rhetoricians. It also formed one of the *progymnasmata* or preparatory exercises of the rhetorical curriculum. For discussion and further references see Konstantin Horna, "Gnome, Gnomendichtung, Gnomologien," PWSup 6 (1935) 74–87 (with an addendum by Kurt von Fritz, cols. 87–90), esp. 74–75; Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft* (2d ed.; Munich: Hueber, 1973) §§ 872–79; idem, *Elemente der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Einführung für Studierende der klassischen, romanischen, englischen und deutschen Philologie* (8th ed.; Munich: Hueber, 1984) § 398; Josef Martin, *Antike Rhetorik: Technik und Methode* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 2/3; Munich: Beck, 1974) 122–24; W. Spoerri, "Gnome 2," *Kl. Pauly* 2.823–29. See now also the extensive discussion by Walter T. Wilson, *Love without Pretense: Romans 12.9–21 and Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom Literature* (WUNT 2/46; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991) 9–39.

⁷ Horna, "Gnome, Gnomendichtung, Gnomologien," 76–79.

⁸ See Spoerri, "Gnome 2," 825.

⁹ It would therefore be less precise to call Pseudo-Phocylides "a didactic poem with a content which may be called gnomic wisdom," as P. W. van der Horst does (*Pseudo-*

view of the many similarities between wisdom literature, gnostic literature, and gnomologia, it would be appropriate to discuss these genres within the context of a macrogenre of wisdom sayings collections, but such a genre has yet to be studied in detail.¹⁰

We may now turn more specifically to Greek gnostic literature. Although gnostic poetry made its appearance at a fairly early stage in the history of Greek literature (the most prominent example being the poetry of Theognis), gnostic literature really came into its own in the Hellenistic period. This was in part due to the exigencies of the rhetorically oriented education, which made heavy use of *γνῶμαι* and related forms. Another contributing factor was the popularization of philosophy and the ensuing emphasis on ethics.¹¹

Whatever the cause may be, we find a number of gnostic works, both in prose and in verse, appearing in and around the Hellenistic period. These include writings like the *Sentences of Democritus*, the *Sentences of Epicharmus* (collected by Axiopistis), Pseudo-Isocrates *Ad Demonicum*, the *Kyriai Doxai* of Epicurus, the *Sentences of Chares*, the *Monostichic Sentences of Menander*, the *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, the *Sentences of Aesopus*, the *Sentences of Sextus*, the *Pythagorean Sayings*, the *Sentences of Clitarchus*, and the *Teachings of Silvanus*, to name but a few.¹²

Phocylides, 80).

¹⁰ Such a macrogenre has been called *λόγοι σοφῶν*, a term that became fashionable after James M. Robinson's seminal article by the same title ("Logoi Sophon': On the Gattung of Q," in *Trajectories through Early Christianity*, by James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971] 71–113). Although Robinson does not discuss Greek literature as such, he considers a "more thorough investigation of Greek literature with regard to this gattung" a desideratum (p. 74). Wilson gives a useful survey of the various sapiential genres based on gnostic material (*Love without Pretense*, 51–90).

¹¹ Cf. Horna, "Gnome, Gnomendichtung, Gnomologien," 78–81; Albrecht Dihle, *Die Goldene Regel: Eine Einführung in die Geschichte der antiken und frühchristlichen Vulgäretik* (Studienhefte zur Altertumswissenschaft 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) 90–95. Posidonius (and under his influence also Platonists like Philo of Larissa and Eudoxus) made extensive use of popular ethical sayings in the propaedeutic part of his ethical system; see Albrecht Dihle, *Der Kanon der zwei Tugenden* (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Geisteswissenschaften 144; Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1968) 28–29.

¹² See the valuable surveys by Küchler, *Weisheitstraditionen*, 237–61; John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), chap. 7 ("Q and Ancient Sayings Collections"), esp. 295–306, and Appendix I ("Ancient Sayings Collections"), esp. 337–40. Cf. also Spoerri, "Gnome 2," 823–29; Gustav Adolf Gerhard, *Phoinix von Kolophon: Texte und Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1909) 228–84 ("Die gnomische Poesie der Hellenisten-

At closer inspection it appears that gnomic texts represent a whole spectrum of possibilities in terms of form, content, and function. These aspects have in fact not yet been adequately investigated, and I will therefore confine myself to a few general observations.

Let us first consider the form, or rather the method of composition in texts such as those named above. In some cases (such as the *Sentences of Menander*) there seems to be no structuring principle other than a purely formal, alphabetic arrangement based on the first letter of the first word of each saying, with no connection between successive sayings.¹³ In other cases we find the well-known practice of relating two or more *γνώμαι* by means of catchwords ('Stichwörter') and association; these sayings are united simply by virtue of the fact that they contain the same catchword, but they are not really related in terms of logic or meaning. In many cases, however, we find small thematic units consisting of a number of sayings on the same topic. These smaller units may be constructed by various means, such as the use of parallelism, antithesis, syntactic variation (e.g., command followed by prohibition), substantiation of a precept by means of a descriptive *γνώμη*, and so on. The relation between successive topics may still be a fortuitous one, however. Finally, there are

zeit"); Pascale Derron, ed. and trans., *Pseudo-Phocylide: Sentences* (Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986) vii-xxxi. Berger gives a comprehensive bibliography of secondary texts ("Hellenistische Gattungen," 1049-74). See also the following studies on some of these texts: Paul Wendland, *Anaximenes von Lampsakos: Studien zur ältesten Geschichte der Rhetorik* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1905), chap. 5 ("Die Rede an Demonikos"); Carl Wefelmeier, *Die Sentenzensammlung der Demonicea* (Athens: Typois Johannou Rossoloutou, 1962); G. A. Gerhard, *XAPHTOE ΓΝΩΜΑΙ* (SHAW 1912/13; Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1912); van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*; Derron, *Pseudo-Phocylide*; Henry Chadwick, *The Sentences of Sextus: A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics* (TextsS 5; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959) (which includes the *Pythagorean Sayings* and the *Sentences of Clitarchus*); Robert L. Wilken, "Wisdom and Philosophy in Early Christianity," *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Robert L. Wilken; University of Notre Dame Center for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity I; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975) 143-68 (on Sextus); William R. Schoedel, "Jewish Wisdom and the Formation of the Christian Ascetic," *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*, 169-99 (on Silvanus); Malcolm L. Peel and Jan Zandee, "The Teachings of Silvanus (VII,4)," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (ed. James M. Robinson; 3d rev. ed.; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 379-95.

¹³ For other examples see Table I in Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen" (between pp. 1064 and 1065).

writings that, on a microlevel, may exhibit the same loose thematic arrangement, but on the macrolevel seem to have an overarching meaning, and may even give indications of a linear and purposeful development in their composition.¹⁴ The *Golden Verses* (as we have seen in chap. 6) is such a text: a specific way of life is prescribed in the first part of the poem, followed by an indication of the real meaning and eschatological benefits of such a life, in the second part.

A typical aspect of the form is that the writing is often presented as an instruction or a piece of advice from a father or teacher to a son or student.¹⁵ This is also true of the *Golden Verses*, in which a teacher appears to instruct a student.

Most Greek gnomic writings are concerned with a more or less fixed number of *topoi*, some of which have been listed by Berger:

die Betonung der Pflichten gegenüber Göttern und Menschen, die Verwirklichung der Gerechtigkeit, die Forderung nach einfachem und offenem Wesen und danach, nicht ohne Rücksicht auf die Gemeinschaft zu handeln, die Übereinstimmung von Wort und Werk, Nüchternheit und Mahnung an die Kürze des Lebens.¹⁶

Some writings, however, contain *topoi* more specifically related to the doctrinal position of the author.¹⁷ A prominent example of such a writing would be the *Kyriai Doxai* of the Epicurean school. The *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* also contains sections on

¹⁴ Cf. also Kloppenborg's description of the Synoptic Sayings Source Q: "The Synoptic Sayings Source is not, as is sometimes thought, a 'random collection of sayings' but manifests a variety of types of literary organization. Not only are the sayings grouped into several topically coherent clusters, there is also a measure of unity and coherence among the several clusters as well as a logical and thematic development throughout the course of the entire collection" (*Formation of Q*, 89).

¹⁵ Cf. Küchler, *Weisheitstraditionen*, 258; Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen," 1052.

¹⁶ Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen," 1052. Cf. also Seneca *Ep.* 95.47–59, who lists the following *topoi*: how the gods should be worshiped (*quomodo sint di colendi*), how to deal with men (*quomodo hominibus sit utendum*), how we should make use of things (*quomodo rebus sit utendum*), and the various virtues. According to Dihle, these derive from Posidonius' ethical system; the latter two *topoi* together are concerned with virtue and vice (*Kanon der zwei Tugenden*, 25–27).

¹⁷ Cf. Seneca's argument on the necessity of a doctrinal basis for precepts (*Ep.* 95.47–59, esp. 95.59): *Quemadmodum folia per se virere non possunt, ramum desiderant, cui inhaereant, ex quo trahant sucum; sic ista praecepta, si sola sunt, marcent; infigi volunt sectae* ("As leaves cannot flourish by their own efforts, but need a branch to which they may cling and from which they may draw sap, so your precepts, when taken alone, wither away; they must be grafted upon a school of philosophy"; trans. R. M. Gummere, LCL). According to Seneca 'doctrine' (*decretum*) is *persuasio ad totam pertinens vitam*; cf. *Ep.* 95.44.

topoi with a pronounced Jewish background,¹⁸ while some parts of the *Golden Verses* have a typically Pythagorean basis, for example, the section on daily self-examination (GV 40–44), the reference to the *tetraktys* (GV 46–48), and the command to abstain from certain foods (GV 67).

The function of gnostic writings corresponds to some extent with their form. The function of alphabetical collections such as the *Sentences of Menander* is simply to preserve the sayings for contemporary and future readers in a handy format. Writings in which the *γνῶμαι* are thematically arranged have the additional function of providing the reader with a fund of quotations on specific topics, whether it be for didactic or more practical rhetorical purposes.¹⁹ In the case of the *Kyriai Doxai* or the *Golden Verses* the function is clearly to introduce the student in summary fashion to a very specific way of life, based on certain philosophical and religious doctrines.²⁰ As such these texts were also of value to more advanced persons, as a reminder of the fundamental moral or religious precepts of the sect.

2 The Golden Verses as a ἱερὸς λόγος

From what has been said up to now, it must be clear that the *Golden Verses* was much more than a handy collection of disparate Pythagorean sayings; it had instead a very definite focus and a goal which may be described as 'religious.' We may therefore with some justification, I think, consider this poem as a Pythagorean *ἱερὸς λόγος* or sacred text, that is, a text purporting

¹⁸ See van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 65.

¹⁹ Cf. John Barnes, "A New Gnomologium: With Some Remarks on Gnostic Anthologies II," *CQ* 45 (1951) 16; Henry Chadwick, "Florilegium," *RAC* 7 (1969) 1131–60, esp. 1131–32.

²⁰ Cf. Hierocles in *CA* 27.11, quoted pp. 16–17 above. Cf. also Jerome's description of the *Golden Verses*: *in quibus omnia eius breviter dogmata continentur* ("in which all his [sc. Pythagoras'] teachings are contained in brief fashion"; *c. Rufin.* 3.39.29). For the above typology of functions, cf. also Küchler, *Weisheitstraditionen*, 258–59, and esp. 251–52: "Die 'Goldenen Worte' wollen jedenfalls eine Summe der pythagoräischen Lebensweise bieten. Der dogmatische Zug, der ihnen eigen ist, unterscheidet sie dabei von den bisher behandelten Logienkollektionen, welche in freier Manier selbstsichtliche weise Worte eines alten Weisen bieten, und rückt sie in die Nähe der *Κύρια δόξα* des Epikur. Hinter beiden scheint eine Schule zu stehen, die ihre Identität an ein philosophisch-weisheitliches Credo banden." A few pages further on Küchler refers to the "katechismushafte Abgeschlossenheit" of the *Golden Verses*, which is lacking in Pseudo-Phocylides (p. 272). For a different typology, see Derron, *Pseudo-Phocylide*, xiii–xxii.

to bring its readers in contact with the divine sphere and considered normative by a group of people.

Carsten Colpe describes the phenomenon of 'sacred writings' in terms of three different considerations: (a) On a *positivistic* level a text may be defined as 'sacred' because it contains this descriptor in its title, or because it is referred to as such in another text. (b) On a *functionalistic* level a text may be considered 'sacred' because its author or recipients used it as such, for instance to regulate in an authoritative manner the beliefs and actions of a community or individuals, or even to constitute a community by being collectively used. (c) On an *ontological* level a text is 'sacred' if the meaning of the sacred ('das Heilige') per se is expressed by means of the text.²¹

Applying these criteria to the *Golden Verses*, we discover the following facts: If, as I have suggested in chapter 5, Heraclides Lembus' testimony about the Pythagorean 'Ἱερὸς λόγος' is in fact a reference to the *Golden Verses*, this would of course fit Colpe's positivistic criterion directly. Apart from this evidence, Hierocles comes close to calling the poem "sacred" when he describes it as "a memorial ... of the whole saintly community" (ἀπομνημόνευμα ὅλου τοῦ ἱεροῦ συλλόγου; in CA 27.11).

The functionalistic aspect becomes evident when we consider the purpose and use made of the *Golden Verses*. The *Golden Verses* itself claims that its doctrines give insight into the relation between the divine and human spheres (GV 49–64), ultimately leading to deification (GV 70–71). The first part of the poem may be seen as preparatory to an initiation into the mysteries alluded to in the second part (cf. esp. GV 64). The *Golden Verses* was used together with other texts that had as their goal the purification and deliverance of the soul (cf. GV 67–68).²² According to Hierocles the poem is a guide "written down by those who have already advanced on the divine way for those coming after" (ὑπὸ τῶν ἥδη τὴν θείαν οἴμον ἀναβεβηκότων ἀπογραφεῖσα τοῖς μετ' αὐτούς; in CA 27.11). We have seen that Galen treated the *Golden Verses* in

²¹ Colpe, "Heilige Schriften," *RAC* 14 (1988) 184–223, esp. 184–89. See in general also S. Morenz and J. Leipoldt, "Buch II (heilig, kultisch)," *RAC* 2 (1951) 688–717, esp. 701–7; Johannes Leipoldt and Siegfried Morenz, *Heilige Schriften: Betrachtungen zur Religionsgeschichte der antiken Mittelmeerwelt* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1953).

²² Cf. also Derron on Pseudo-Phocylides 228–30, where language similar to the final part of the *Golden Verses* is used: "Le poème a quelque chose de la révélation d'un Ἱερὸς λόγος" (*Pseudo-Phocylide*, 18 n. 1).

an almost ritualistic manner, reciting it at least twice a day, as an aid in curbing passions, while Alciphron's Pythagorean also chanted the poem at will.²³ To this we may add the general and widespread respect in which the poem was held in late antiquity.²⁴

Whether the *Golden Verses* may validly be viewed a *ιερός λόγος* or not, the poem evidently intended to form and regulate the moral behavior and beliefs of its readers. This aspect of the poem will be considered in the next section.

3 *The Psychagogic Function of the Golden Verses*

As Hellenistic philosophers focused more and more on ethics, they also became correspondingly more aware of the need for moral and spiritual growth, both for themselves and for their students. Consequently, they devised ways of guiding their students toward spiritual maturity, and developed disciplines and practices that would enable a person to continue growing more mature by him- or herself. This system of intellectual, moral, and spiritual care, known as psychagogy (*ψυχαγωγία*, 'spiritual guidance'), was well-established in different philosophical traditions by the late Hellenistic and imperial periods: it was practiced to a greater or lesser degree by Epicureans like Zeno of Sidon and his student Philodemus, by Stoics like Musonius Rufus, Epictetus, Seneca, Dio Chrysostom, and Marcus Aurelius, by Platonists like Plutarch and Galen, and by Neopythagoreans like 'Sextus' and 'Theano'.²⁵

²³ Galen *Affect. dignot.* 6.10; Alciphron 3.19.7. For the cathartic function incantation had for Pythagoreans, see Pierre Boyancé, *Le culte des Muses chez les philosophes grecs: Études d'histoire et de psychologie religieuses* (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 141; 1936; reprint, Paris: de Boccard, 1972) 93–131.

²⁴ See chap. 2 above.

²⁵ The basic study of psychagogy remains Paul Rabbow, *Seelenführung: Methodik der Exerzitien in der Antike* (Munich: Kösel, 1954), but see the criticism by Georg Luck, *Gnomon* 28 (1956) 268–71. Other basic studies are Ilsetraut Hadot, *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie 13; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969); idem, "Spiritual Guide"; Heinz Gerd Ingenkamp, *Plutarchs Schriften über die Heilung der Seele* (Hypomnemata 34; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971); Thomas Bonhoeffer, *Ursprung und Wesen der christlichen Seelsorge* (BEvT 95; Munich: Kaiser, 1985); idem, "Zur Entstehung des Begriffs Seelsorge," *ABG* 33 (1990) 7–21; Pierre Hadot, "Exercices spirituels," *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (2d ed.; Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1987) 13–58. Cf. also Robert J. Newman, "Cotidie Meditare: Theory and Practice of the *Meditatio* in Imperial Stoicism," *ANRW* II.36.3 (1989) 1473–1517; Abraham J. Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," *ANRW* II.26.1 (1992) 267–333, esp. 301–4. The term *ψυχαγωγία* means 'persuasion, winning of men's souls' in antiquity (see LSJ, s.v., II); the meaning 'spiritual guidance' is a neologism.

Psychagogic principles are also discernible in New Testament authors like Paul and in early Christian texts like the Sermon on the Mount.²⁶ The roots of psychagogy go back much further, however: Epicurus stresses such care (cf. especially his letters and the *Kyriai Doxai*), the *Golden Verses* itself is an important early witness to psychagogy, and elements of it may be found in Hellenistic gnomic texts in general (cf., e.g., [Isocrates] *Ad Demonicum*).²⁷

It is important for our purposes to keep in mind that psychagogy may be viewed from two perspectives: from the perspective of the teacher-guide, or from that of the recipient, the student. In the case of the former, the focus is on the teacher's responsibilities, on procedures to be followed in guidance, on considerations to be kept in mind so as not to discourage the student, on the potential assistance given by fellow-students, and so forth.²⁸ In the case of the student, psychagogy has to do with the principles the student has to internalize and apply in his life, and the various practices and exercises he has to perform to mature morally and spiritually. Such exercises include memorizing precepts in order to be able to apply them when the need arises, meditation, pre-deliberation, and self-examination. To assist him in his growth, the teacher or spiritual community provide him with instructive material such as elementary introductions, *ἐπιτομαί* (résumés), and sayings. Although the process is set into motion by a teacher-

For Epicurean psychagogy cf. esp. Philodemus *Περὶ παρηγορίας*; see Clarence E. Glad, "Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy" (Ph.D. Diss., Brown University, 1991) (more literature in Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists," 301 n. 153). For the Stoics see I. Hadot, *Seelenleitung*; Cora E. Lutz, ed. and trans., "Musonius Rufus 'the Roman Socrates,'" *YCIS* 10 (1947); A. C. van Geytenbeek, *Musonius Rufus and Greek Diatribe* (rev. ed.; *Wijzgerige teksten en studies* 8; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1963); B. J. Hijmans, "ἈΕΚΗΕΙΣ: Notes on Epictetus' Educational System (*Wijzgerige teksten en studies* 2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959); cf. also Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 77, 78. For Platonists see Ingenkamp, *Plutarchs Schriften*; cf. also Galen *Affect. dignot.* For Neopythagoreans cf. the *Sentences of Sextus* and Theano's letters to Eubule, Nicistrate, and Callisto = *Ep. Pyth.* 5-7; also in Thesleff, *Pythagorean Texts*, 195-96, 197-200.

²⁶ For Paul, see Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), esp. 61-94; idem, "'Pastoral Care' in the Thessalonian Church," *NTS* 36 (1990) 375-91; idem, "Hellenistic Moralists," 303-4. For the Sermon on the Mount, see Hans Dieter Betz, "The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-7:27): Its Literary Genre and Function," *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 1-16. See in general also Bonhoeffer, *Ursprung und Wesen*.

²⁷ Cf. the quotation in n. 5 above.

²⁸ Cf., e.g., the discussion in Philodemus *Περὶ παρηγορίας*; see on this also the brief summary by I. Hadot, "Spiritual Guide," 455.

guide, the student is expected to continue on his own, using the exercises and texts provided by the teacher. The *Golden Verses* seems to be a text with such a psychagogic function; some of the other texts used for this purpose are the letters and *Kyriai Doxai* of Epicurus, the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, and the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).²⁹

When we study the *Golden Verses* from this perspective, it becomes clear that the whole poem has been composed with the psychagogic function in mind. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the first part of the poem contains the basic moral principles the student had to master, while the second part encourages the student to persevere by indicating the benefits to be obtained by this way of life. Mastering and practice of, as well as meditation on the precepts contained in the *Golden Verses* are repeatedly emphasized (cf. *GV* 9, 13, 14, 35, 45, 48, 49, 65). Predeliberation and self-evaluation form the heart of the poem's moral teaching (*GV* 27–44); the aim is to make the student more aware of the moral implications of his actions and thus to help him in self-improvement. The goal of the precepts is to set the student's feet firmly on the road to virtue (*GV* 46) and to prepare him for more advanced doctrines (cf. *GV* 49b–64). The testimonia support this view of the poem's function: the poem was recited daily and precepts taken from it were chanted at decisive moments to strengthen the person's moral resolve.³⁰ As we have seen, the *Golden Verses*' function as elementary introduction (*στοιχείωσις*) to, and as summary (*ἐπιτομή*) of Pythagorean doctrines, was already recognized by ancient readers.³¹ In late antiquity it had an important propaedeutic function in Hierocles of Alexandria's philosophical curriculum.³²

²⁹ See I. Hadot, "Spiritual Guide," 451–52; Betz, *Essays*, 1–16, and especially his description of the genre and function of the Sermon on the Mount: "The literary genre of the SM is that of an epitome presenting the theology of Jesus in a systematic fashion. The epitome is a composition carefully designed out of sayings of Jesus grouped according to thematic points of doctrine considered to be of primary importance. Correspondingly, its function is to provide the disciple of Jesus with the necessary tool for becoming a Jesus theologian.... The SM is not law to be obeyed, but theology to be intellectually appropriated and internalized, in order then to be creatively developed and implemented in concrete situations of life" (pp. 15–16).

³⁰ Cf. Galen *Affect. dignot.* 6.10; Alciphron 3.19.7.

³¹ Cf. Hierocles in *CA* 27.11; Jerome c. *Rufin.* 3.39.

³² Cf. Westerink, "Hierokles II," 110.

4 *The Setting of the Golden Verses*

In the light of the preceding discussion, we may postulate that the *Golden Verses* was probably used as a fundamental text in the instruction of the young students of a Pythagorean community. This view is supported by Heraclides Lembus' testimony, if my suggestion is accepted that he cites the preface to the *Golden Verses* (ὦ νέοι, ἀλλὰ σέβεσθε μεθ' ἡσυχίης τάδε πάντα, "Young men, show reverence in silence to all the following"; ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.7).³³ The internal evidence also endorses this interpretation: The repeated use of the first and second person seems to imply a teaching situation involving a teacher and student (cf. *GV* 7, 11–12, 14, 18, 22–23, 24, 29, 30, 34, 39, 46–47, 50, 52–54, 63, 65–66, 67, 70–71). Furthermore, when the author in *GV* 67–68 *simply refers* to dietary precepts occurring elsewhere, probably in two other texts (ἀλλ' εἵργου βρωτῶν ὧν εἶπομεν ἔν τε Καθαρμοῖς / ἔν τε Λύσει ψυχῆς, "But keep away from food that we have mentioned in *Purifications* / and in *Deliverance of the Soul*"), it is obvious that our poem functioned in a wider teaching context. These other texts presumably contained more specific information about the required way of life, not only about dietary requirements.

Very little may be deduced about the social life of this Pythagorean community. Apparently it did not differ significantly from that of their Greek contemporaries: members of this Pythagorean community took part in the normal cult (*GV* 1–2), they kept up good relationships with their family (*GV* 4), they were serious about their friends (*GV* 5–8), they owned property and spent money (*GV* 16, 37–38), they visited the gymnasium (*GV* 33). They kept to some kind of dietary regimen (*GV* 67) and perhaps also participated in a mystery cult of nature (cf. *GV* 47–48, 52, 64–65, with my commentary). It is clear from these few indications, however, that this community did not have all their property in common, as the early Pythagoreans supposedly did, nor did they live an ascetic life like the 'Pythagorists' lampooned in Middle Comedy (see the next chapter). They rather appear to have participated fully in the normal economic and social life of their time, very much like those Pythagoreans we encounter in the anecdotes of 5th- and 4th-century Pythagorean life preserved by

³³ See pp. 56–57 above.

Diodorus of Sicily, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, most of which are based on accounts by Aristoxenus.³⁴

³⁴ Cf. e.g., Diodorus 10.4.1, 10.4.3–6; Porphyry *VP* 59–61; Iamblichus *VP* 234–39.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HISTORICAL LOCUS AND VALUE

1 *The Golden Verses and the Pythagorean Tradition*

Despite many remaining problems, considerable progress has been made during the past century in delineating the history and shape of the Pythagorean tradition.¹ The main stages in the history of this movement, as far as we are able to determine, are the following:

Pythagoras founded the movement named after him in Croton in Southern Italy ca. 530 BC. Although it is difficult to determine the precise nature of this community and its influence, it is clear from subsequent developments that it was not simply a religious and philosophical movement, but that it extended its influence into the political arena as well. The early Pythagoreans were grouped according to two distinct principles: On the one hand, there were different stages of initiation. Aspirant Pythagoreans were sub-

¹ A survey of modern scholarship on Pythagoreanism falls outside the scope of this chapter. For a brief, but excellent discussion of research up to 1962, see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 1–12. A few subsequent publications are surveyed by Thesleff, “Pythagoreans in the Light and Shadows of Recent Research.” Thesleff also discusses research on the Hellenistic Pythagorean texts in his *Introduction*, 30–45. Recently an annotated, but by no means complete bibliographical survey of research on Pythagoreanism has been published by Luis E. Navia (*Pythagoras: An Annotated Bibliography* [Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 1128; New York: Garland, 1990]). Eduard Zeller’s discussion still remains an important point of departure (*Philosophie der Griechen* 1.361–617, 3.2.92–175), especially with the valuable additional notes by Mondolfo and Del Re in E. Zeller, *La filosofia dei greci nel suo sviluppo storico* 1.2 and 3.4 (trans. and augmented by Rodolfo Mondolfo; pt. 1, vol. 2, 2d ed.; pt. 3, vol. 4, ed. Raffaello Del Re; *Il pensiero storico* 18, 73; Florence: La nuova Italia, 1950, 1979). Comprehensive recent accounts of Pythagoreanism include those by Burkert, *Lore and Science*; von Fritz, “Pythagoras 1A–B”; Dörrie, “Pythagoras 1C”; van der Waerden, “Pythagoras”; idem, *Pythagoreer*; and W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (6 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962–81) 1.146–340. Additional fairly extensive recent treatments of Pythagoreanism are de Vogel, *Pythagoras*; and J. A. Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* (Phoenix Supplementary Vol. 7; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966). Also worthy of mention is G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 214–38.

jected to strict physiognomic and moral examinations during a three-year trial period. If they passed this test, they had to endure a further five years during which they had to listen to the master's teachings in silence, and without ever meeting Pythagoras face to face. Only after successfully completing this period were they accepted as full members of the society.² It is questionable whether these Pythagoreans ever lived in full community of goods, as later reports indicate. In fact, the nature of our sources makes it difficult to be too specific about this early Pythagorean community. "Doch ist an dem Bestehen einer eng geschlossenen Gemeinschaft mit festen Regeln, mit einer Rangordnung und mit eigenen Erkennungszeichen und Symbolen nicht zu zweifeln."³

In addition to this hierarchical distinction between Pythagoreans, there was also a distinction between an inner and an outer circle, the *μαθηματικοί* and the *ἀκουσματικοί*. Despite confusion and temporal distortions in ancient reports, it seems that the former group constituted the inner circle, that is, those Pythagoreans who had the full benefit of Pythagoras' teaching, who not only obeyed his injunctions, but were also told the reasons behind them. They were the more rational, scientific Pythagoreans who were interested in the *μαθήματα* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music) and who demanded proofs before accepting a doctrine. The *ἀκουσματικοί*, on the other hand, were those Pythagoreans who were too involved in the politics of the community to be able to devote their full attention to the meaning and significance of the doctrines; they simply obeyed them to the letter. They were a more fundamentalistic, ritual-minded group who emphasized the correct *βίος* or way of life, and who believed without asking for reasons.⁴ The *ἀκουσματικοί* probably had a special interest in the early Pythagorean sayings called *ἀκούσματα*, which express among other things a belief in the omnipresence of *daimones* and which contain many dietary and ritualistic taboos connected with a belief in metempsychosis.⁵

² Cf. Iamblichus *VP* 71–74; Diogenes Laertius 8.10. See also von Fritz, "Pythagoras 1B," 219–20.

³ Von Fritz, "Pythagoras 1B," 220–21; quotation from col. 221.

⁴ See Kurt von Fritz, *Mathematiker und Akusmatiker bei den alten Pythagoreern* (SBAW 1960/11; Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1960); idem, "Pythagoras 1B," 221–25; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 192–208; van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 64–68.

⁵ Burkert gives a good survey of the relevant primary and secondary literature on the *akousmata* (*Lore and Science*, 166–92). See esp. Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 269–

At the beginning of the 5th century there was an anti-Pythagorean reaction, led by Cylon. This did not, however, curtail the growth of Pythagorean influence in Southern Italy. A much more serious anti-Pythagorean outbreak occurred in the middle of the 5th century, causing many Pythagoreans to flee Italy and emigrate to the Greek mainland. As a result, Pythagorean centers were established at Phlius and Thebes. Pythagoreans who remained in Southern Italy gradually regained some political influence. A final exodus of Pythagoreans from Italy took place ca. 390, although Archytas and his followers managed to retain some influence in Tarentum for about a decade longer. From this time onwards, the so-called *Πυθαγορίσται* made their appearance on the Greek mainland.⁶ These 'Pythagorists' are depicted in 4th-century Middle Comedy as unkempt, mendicant philosophers practicing a strict asceticism and claiming an elevated status in the afterlife.⁷ They were probably a development of the acousmatic brand of Pythagoreanism, reduced to beggary after their exile from Southern Italy. An historical example of such 'acousmatics' from the first half of the 4th century is Diodorus of Aspendus, whose way of life anticipated the Cynic mode, and who is reputed to have made known "the Pythagorean sayings" (*διέδωκε τὰς Πυθαγορείους φωνάς*; Iamblichus *VP* 266).⁸ It is tempting to identify these sayings with the *Golden Verses*, but Diodorus' 'Cynic' life-style does not correspond to the 'normal,' moderate way of life advocated in the *Golden Verses*.

According to Aristoxenus of Tarentum (fl. 336 BC), one of the earliest historians of Pythagoreanism, the movement had disappeared in his time.⁹ We know, however, that the account of Aristoxenus is biased towards a specific form of the Pythagorean tradition, one that emphasized the rational and 'scientific' nature of Pythagoreanism (i.e., the tradition represented by the *μαθηματικοί*); it is therefore possible that he deliberately ignored other

312. See also Johan C. Thom, "'Don't Walk on the Highways': The Pythagorean *Akousmata* and Early Christian Literature," *JBL* 113 (1994) 93–112, esp. 94–96.

⁶ For the outline thus far, see Kurt von Fritz, *Pythagorean Politics in Southern Italy: An Analysis of the Sources* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1977), esp. the summary on p. 92; idem, "Pythagoras 1B," 210–19.

⁷ The fragments are collected in DK 58E.

⁸ For Diodorus' 'Cynicism,' see the lucid discussion by Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 202–4.

⁹ Cf. Iamblichus *VP* 251; Diogenes Laertius 8.46 (= Aristoxenus frgs. 18 and 19 Wehrli); also Diodorus 15.76.4.

manifestations of the movement less amenable to his own position.¹⁰

In 209 BC Cato the Elder was supposedly introduced to Pythagoreanism in Tarentum by his host Nearchus, although this event may be a literary fiction.¹¹ During the Hellenistic period, a large number of Pythagorean treatises, most of them pseudepigrapha, make their appearance.¹² The dating of these works is very problematic, which seriously detracts from their value as historical evidence. In addition, they are often considered literary fictions produced to satisfy a demand for Pythagorean texts, but with no real socio-historical foundation.¹³ Even though most of them are without doubt indebted to Platonic, Peripatetic, and Stoic doctrines, this and the fact that they are pseudepigrapha need not mean that they are falsifications, that is, that they do not express the beliefs and doctrines of a specific group. As an analogy we may refer to post-biblical Jewish apocalyptic texts: these were also pseudepigraphic and were heavily influenced by 'foreign,' non-biblical traditions, but most scholars would agree that they were written from the perspective of a specific community and with specific social needs in mind. The fact remains, however, that there are very few references to Pythagoreans by name during the Hellenistic period. Despite the lack of concrete evidence many scholars have assumed that Pythagoreanism as a religious movement did continue right through the Hellenistic period in some form, such as small, secret sects, before it made its reappearance as Neopythagoreanism sometime in the 1st century BC.¹⁴ According to Dörrie this is the only possible explanation for the fact that

¹⁰ Von Fritz, "Pythagoras 1A," 174–75; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 198–202.

¹¹ Cicero *Sen.* 39–41; Plutarch *Cat. Mai.* 2.3–4. Cf. Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 3.2.98. Van der Waerden is inclined to lend some historical credence to this report (*Pythagoreer*, 274–75).

¹² The texts have been collected in Thesleff, *Pythagorean Texts*.

¹³ Thus Walter Burkert, "Hellenistische Pseudopythagorica," *Philologus* 105 (1961) 16–43, 226–46; cf. also idem, *Lore and Science*, 95–96. For discussions about the dating of these texts, see chap. 1, n. 40 above.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 3.2.92–108; Hermann Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (4th ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965) 150; Georges Méautis, *Recherches sur le pythagorisme* (Neuchâtel: Attinger, 1922) 9–20; Jérôme Carcopino, *La basilique pythagoricienne de la Porte Majeure* (Paris: Chouveau, 1927; reprint, Paris: L'artisan du livre, 1943) 182–95; Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (2 vols.; Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 5/2/1–2; 3d ed.; Munich: Beck, 1967–74) 2.415; Dörrie, "Pythagoras 1C," 268–70; more literature in Burkert, "Hellenistische Pseudopythagorica," 228 n. 3.

the Neopythagoreans kept the same practical precepts, especially those relating to ritual purity, as early Pythagoreans did.¹⁵

During the 1st century BC there was a revival of Pythagoreanism now known as Neopythagoreanism. According to Cicero, this revival originated with his friend Nigidius Figulus, but there is some doubt whether the latter was a Pythagorean at all—Cicero's statement may simply have been intended as a compliment to Nigidius' polymathy.¹⁶ Be that as it may, from this time onward we once again find historical persons labelled 'Pythagoreans': besides Nigidius Figulus, we know of Anaxilaus of Larissa, the two Sextii, and Sotion (a teacher of Seneca), who were all active in Rome; Apollonius of Tyana and Alexander of Abonuteichus, in Asia Minor and elsewhere; Moderatus of Gades, Nicomachus of Gerasa, and Numenius of Apamea, in Spain, the Decapolis, and Syria, respectively. These figures (including scientists, philosophers, and wonder-workers) only exemplify the widespread interest in Pythagoreanism during this period.¹⁷

Finally, Pythagoreanism was gradually absorbed into Neoplatonism, culminating in the 'Pythagoreanizing' program of Iamblichus, and ceased to exist as an independent movement.¹⁸

Keeping in mind that the *Golden Verses* probably originated in the latter half of the 4th century BC (chap. 5), how does it relate to the development of the Pythagorean tradition? In terms of content it is only tangentially related to any of the later pseudepigraphic texts, and it has very little connection with the 'Pythagorists,' apart from sharing an interest in the afterlife: unlike the 'Pythagorists,' the community in which the *Golden Verses* was used participated fully in the regular cultural life of its time (see previous chapter). Even though the community represented by the *Golden Verses* like the *ἀκουσματικοί* emphasized the correct way of life

¹⁵ Dörrie, "Pythagoras 1C," 269–70.

¹⁶ Cicero *Timaeus* 1.1: *Fuit enim vir ille* [sc. Nigidius Figulus] *cum ceteris artibus, quae quidem dignae libero essent, ornatus omnibus, tum acer investigator et diligens earum rerum, quae a natura involutae videntur; denique sic iudico, post illos nobiles Pythagoreos, quorum disciplina extincta est quodam modo, cum aliquot saecula in Italia Siciliaque viguisset, hunc extitisse, qui illam renovaret.* For Nigidius as Pythagorean, see van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 278–79. Holger Thesleff is more cautious (review of *Nigidio Figulo*, by Adriana Della Casa, *Gnomon* 37 [1965] 44–48).

¹⁷ See on this period, Dörrie, "Pythagoras 1C." Van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, also has a chapter on the Pythagoreans of the Hellenistic and Roman period (chap. 12).

¹⁸ Cf. the title of O'Meara's recent book on Neoplatonism, *Pythagoras Revived*.

and followed some kind of dietary regime (*GV* 67–68), the poem on the whole expresses a much more moderate and rational view of life than may be discerned from the *akousmata*. On the other hand, the poem is more interested in morality than in scientific studies, although it is quite possible that the *μαθηματικοί* presented their scientific work as a mystery cult of nature such as that referred to in the last part of the *Golden Verses* (*GV* 50–66). Conceivably, ‘mathematic’ Pythagoreans could have used the poem as a moral propaedeuticum, as in later times the Neoplatonists did. The poem would in any case have been used in the initial stages of the Pythagorean’s training. The world view espoused by the *Golden Verses* thus lies somewhere between that of the *ἄκουσματικοί* and that of the *μαθηματικοί*.

This general impression is confirmed when we consider the poem in more detail. As we have seen, much of the *Golden Verses* derives from wisdom material that is not bound to a specific philosophical tradition. When we turn to the more specifically Pythagorean material, we find that it often differs slightly from other known Pythagorean doctrines. The first such difference is the hierarchy of beings in *GV* 1–3, namely, gods, heroes, and *daimones*. In other traditions it is gods, *daimones*, and heroes. It is not only the order that differs; the meaning of *daimones* too varies: instead of referring to intermediate beings just below the gods, it here designates the souls of the dead. The practice of reviewing one’s deeds before going to bed (*GV* 40–44) is firmly embedded in the Pythagorean tradition, but its function was given two diverging interpretations: it may have a moral, psychagogic function as is the case in the *Golden Verses*, or it may be used to train one’s memory.¹⁹ The oath cited in *GV* 47–48a is an adaptation of the well-known Pythagorean oath to fit the present context.²⁰ The vexing passage in *GV* 50–51 about the *σύστασις* of gods and men seems to reflect a doctrine of a divine essence pervading the whole universe, which is elsewhere only found in late testimonies, and which has been suspected of Stoic influence. If we accept a date before Chrysippus for the *Golden Verses*, the poem would be the earliest evidence for this as a Pythagorean doctrine. The last part of the poem (*GV* 50–71), with its mixture of Pythagorean and Orphic ideas, provides us with tantalizing

¹⁹ See pp. 38–43 above.

²⁰ See pp. 37–38 above.

clues of an Orphic-Pythagorean mysteriosophy, but like the Lord of Delphi it “neither affirms nor conceals but indicates” (οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει; Heraclitus frg. 93 DK); we have to flesh out the skeleton ourselves.²¹ Finally, the promise of immortality in *GV* 70–71 makes no reference to the doctrine of metempsychosis, which may indicate that this doctrine was not held by all Pythagoreans. The quotation from Empedocles in the very last line probably indicate that Empedocles is considered one of the early Pythagoreans and as such an authoritative figure within this community.²²

The *Golden Verses* thus leaves us with the impression of a Pythagorean tradition related to other known strands of Pythagoreanism, but not identical with any of them.²³ It provides evidence for the existence of a Pythagorean group sometime towards the end of the 4th century BC, a group which still had stages of initiation and training, since this poem looks forward to other, more advanced teachings contained in texts called *Purifications* and *Deliverance of the Soul* (*GV* 67–68). This implies some organizational system to provide for such training, but since the poem deals with problems facing persons who participated in the normal social life (visiting the gymnasium, spending money, keeping a certain life-style; *GV* 32–38), it is clear that these Pythagoreans did not share a communal life, but rather practiced their ‘Pythagoreanism’ within their normal living.²⁴ Although they did have at

²¹ See pp. 47–48, 51–53 above, as well as the next section.

²² The quotation is discussed on p. 48 above. Empedocles was often regarded as a Pythagorean in Antiquity; see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, General Index, s.v. ‘Empedocles.’ There may be other Empedoclean influences as well: the oath on which *GV* 47–48a is based, is ascribed to Empedocles in *Theol. ar.* 18, p. 22.20; the title *Καθαρμοί* to which *GV* 67 refers, is also used for one of Empedocles’ works; the reference to ‘strife’ in *GV* 59 has an Empedoclean ring. On the other hand, the context in which it is used, differs from the interpretation given to strife by Empedocles, and the poem contains no clear reference to metempsychosis, a central doctrine for Empedocles.

²³ Contra van der Horst, who thinks the *Golden Verses* demonstrate the basic uniformity of the Pythagorean tradition (*Vers d’or*, xxxii–xxxiii). Leonid Zhmud’ also emphasizes the diversity of Pythagorean traditions, and warns against seeking for a common denominator (“Orphism and Grafitti from Olbia,” *Hermes* 120 [1992] 166–67).

²⁴ Despite Aristoxenus’ statement to the contrary, we still find Pythagoreans like Lycon, a contemporary of Aristotle, in the second half of the 4th century. Although he is usually associated by modern scholars with the earlier Diodorus of Aspendus (cf. Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 1.426 n. 3; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 204), there is nothing in the extant testimonies to support this (cf. DK 57.1–5). What we do know, is that he emphasized a moderate Pythagorean regime (καὶ Πυθαγόρας δ’ ὁ Σάμιος μετρίᾳ τροφῇ ἐχρήτο, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Λύκων ὁ Ἰασεὺς ἐν τῷ Περὶ Πυθαγορείου <βίου>; Heraclides of Tarentum ap. Athenaeus

least a rudimentary interest in cosmology (GV 50–64), we cannot be certain that this interest extended further than what was needed to undergird their moral and religious views. In this respect they are clearly related to the Pythagorean-Orphic movements Zeller detects in the Hellenistic period.²⁵

2 *The Golden Verses and the Orphic Tradition*

Pythagoreanism and Orphism are closely related in sources from as early as the 5th century BC:²⁶ the origin of the doctrine of metempsychosis is variously ascribed to one or the other of the movements; both movements abstained from certain foods like meat and beans; both movements emphasized the need for a complete way of life in order to purify the soul; there are similarities between the Pythagorean number theory and certain Orphic mythemes; Pythagoras is in some sources called a student of the Orphic Aglaophamus, in others the real author of books ascribed to Orpheus; and so forth.²⁷ Several Orphic works from the 5th and the 4th century are ascribed to Pythagoreans such as Cercops, Brontinus, and Zopyrus of Heraclea.²⁸ In the Hellenistic period too, a number of so-called Orphica had a Pythagorean origin. These include a *Hieros Logos*, a *Hymn to Number*, and a poem called *Lyre*.²⁹ It therefore does not surprise us that there are a few 'Orphic connections' discernible in the *Golden Verses*.

2.69e = DK 57.3; see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 204), a view which would fit the teaching of the *Golden Verses* quite well. See the section on "The Setting of the *Golden Verses*" in chap. 7 above.

²⁵ Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 3.2.92–97.

²⁶ Cf. e.g., Herodotus 2.81; Ion of Chios frg. 36B2 DK. Texts, translations, and discussion may be found in Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 220–22.

²⁷ Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 125–32, gives a survey of ancient sources and modern discussions; see also *ibid.*, 39, 467 n. 6. In subsequent publications the same author emphasizes both the areas of overlap and of discontinuity between these two movements ("Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries: New Evidence and Old Problems of Interpretation," in *Protocol of the Twenty-Eighth Colloquy of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture* [ed. W. Wuellner; Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1977], esp. 6–7; "Craft Versus Sect: The Problem of Orphics and Pythagoreans," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition 3: Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World* [ed. Ben F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982] 1–22, 183–89). See also Guthrie, *Orpheus*, 216–21.

²⁸ See on these "early Pythagorean Orphica" West, *Orphic Poems*, 7–15.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 29–33. See also the list of works discussed by Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 1.366 n. 2.

We have already noticed that *GV* 55–56 share a common tradition with Orphic material on the ignorance of human beings which leads to suffering.³⁰ Other shared ideas are the following: the world as a living, breathing being (*GV* 50–51); ritual healings (*GV* 66); the use of *Καθαρμοί* as titles of basic texts (*GV* 67); and the importance of dietary abstentions (*GV* 67).³¹ We further find the notion of the kinship of man with the gods and the promise of immortality in both the *Golden Verses* and the ‘Orphic’ Gold Leaves of Southern Italy.³² Finally, there are striking similarities in formulation between fragments of the ‘Orphic’ poet Linus (3d/2d century BC?) and lines from the *Golden Verses*, some of which have been pointed out by West.³³

These commonalities indicate at the least that the community of the *Golden Verses* had close contacts with, or was at least attracted to Orphic ideas. A stronger hypothesis would be that the poem provide evidence for the existence of ‘Orphic-Pythagorean mysteries’ (Zeller) in the Hellenistic period.³⁴

3 *The Golden Verses and Other Philosophical Traditions*

There is little or no evidence that the *Golden Verses* was directly influenced by any other philosophical tradition, but it does manifest the same interest in the practical moral life of the individual that we also encounter in other Hellenistic traditions such as Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Cynicism. However, the differences between our poem and these other traditions are obvious and examples may easily be listed. While the Stoic sage would emphasize a life in accordance with nature, devoid of all passions, the *Golden Verses* simply stresses the need for moral awareness of the consequences of action; its doctrine is *metriopatheia*, rather than *apatheia*. Like the Epicurean, the author of the *Golden Verses* recommends continuous examination of one’s actions, but while the former practices such examinations within a community con-

³⁰ Pp. 51–53 above.

³¹ See the commentary *ad locc.* below.

³² See the commentary on *GV* 63 and 71 below.

³³ Martin West refers to connections between Linus frg. 10 and the *Golden Verses* (*Orphic Poems*, 61 n. 87). Compare also Linus frgs. 2.1–2 and 9 West with *GV* 52–53, 59–60. For the date of these fragments, see West, *Orphic Poems*, 56–61.

³⁴ See n. 25 above. Zeller does not refer to the *Golden Verses*, however.

text, the Pythagorean of our poem does it in private.³⁵ The *Golden Verses* shares with Cynicism the ideal of a simple life, including a sparse diet, but the dietary restrictions of the *Golden Verses* are not simply to underline the social independence of the Pythagorean; they rather have a moral and even metaphysical rationale (cf. *GV* 9–10, 32–34, 67). Nor does the Pythagorean of the *Golden Verses* flout social conventions and practices as the Cynic does; as we have seen, this Pythagorean did not reject the economic and cultural life of his time (cf. *GV* 30–39). As is the case in Stoic and Epicurean thought, a person's moral behavior according to our poem is determined by his views on physics and theology (cf. *GV* 50–64), but we do not have enough evidence to determine to what extent theoretical physics and theology played a role within this Pythagorean community. It is clear from its reception in antiquity that the main impact of the poem lay in its moral teachings, and especially the practice of moral guidance (psychagogy); it is the disciplined, but moderate, common sense morality of the poem that was its main attraction.

4 Conclusion and Evaluation

To conclude the introduction to the *Golden Verses* I wish to indicate briefly what, to my mind, is the basic interest of this poem. In the first place, the general popularity of the poem in late antiquity has to be taken seriously as an indication of its value for ancient readers. I would suggest that this value lies in the fact that the *Golden Verses* contains the basic moral principles one has to apply in order to reach spiritual maturity. The poem not only consists of elementary wisdom teachings, it also gives a program to be followed: the poem is, in fact, a basic and valuable psychagogic instrument. Furthermore, even though the poem contains some Pythagorean elements, these do not obtrude; the moral and even most of the religious principles would have been acceptable to a wide spectrum of ancient readers. The lack of doctrinal specificity, the general and even banal nature of many sayings which forms a stumbling block for modern scholars, are precisely what made this poem useful for ancient readers. In our assessment of the poem, we should therefore recognize the importance of the

³⁵ Cf. *GV* 40–44. For the Epicurean practice, cf. esp. Philodemus *Περὶ παρηγορίας*.

Golden Verses as representing in summary form some widely accepted moral guidelines.

Secondly, the poem is significant as an example of a basic introductory text used by a community in the instruction and guidance of young members. As such it should be added to a growing collection of ancient texts which scholars agree were used in the psychagogic process; insight into the *Golden Verses* contributes towards our understanding of this process. What is of special interest in this poem, is the way popular wisdom material is combined with fairly specific promises about esoteric insights that will be given at a later stage in the student's development. Familiarity with, and proficiency in exoteric traditions are preconditions for advancing to more secret doctrines. The poem thus shows an awareness of the pedagogic process *as process* with successive stages.

In the third place, the *Golden Verses* displays a remarkable compositional unity—remarkable, because gnomic texts are notorious for their lack of cohesion. The unity of the poem is not immediately obvious on the surface level, but derives from a topical cohesion between adjacent sections on a conceptual level. Unity is furthermore a function of the directionality of the poem: all the moral instructions have as ultimate object the perfection and eventual immortality of the student.

As far as the Pythagorean tradition is concerned, the *Golden Verses* confirms the idea that it would be wrong to think of Pythagoreanism as a fairly homogeneous movement, since the poem cannot be identified with any known Pythagorean grouping. One should therefore be careful to allow for diversity within the Pythagorean tradition and not to be too prescriptive about what constitutes a Pythagorean doctrine. The Pythagorean community from which the poem derives, consisted paradoxically of moral rationalists with a predilection for Orphic doctrines and an interest in Empedocles. If as I suggested, the *Golden Verses* originated between 350 and 300 BC, it provides us with valuable evidence about the Pythagorean tradition in a period about which we otherwise know very little.

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

ΠΤΘΑΓΟΡΙΚΑ ΧΡΤΣΑ ΕΠΗ

Ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα θεούς, νόμῳ ὡς διάκεινται,
τίμα καὶ σέβου ὄρκον. ἔπειθ' ἥρωας ἀγαυούς
τούς τε καταχθονίους σέβε δαίμονας ἔννομα ῥέζων
σοὺς τε γονεῖς τίμα τούς τ' ἄγχιστ' ἐγγεγαῶτας.
τῶν δ' ἄλλων ἀρετῇ ποιεῦ φίλον ὅστις ἄριστος. 5
πραέσι δ' εἶκε λόγοισ' ἔργοισι τ' ἐπωφελίμοισι.
μηδ' ἔχθαιρε φίλον σὸν ἀμαρτάδος εἵνεκα μικρῆς,
ὄφρα δύνῃ· δύναμις γὰρ ἀνάγκης ἐγγύθι ναίει.
Ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως ἴσθι, κρατεῖν δ' εἰθίξο τῶνδε·
γαστρὸς μὲν πρῶτιστα καὶ ὕπνου λαγνείης τε 10
καὶ θυμοῦ. πρήξης δ' αἰσχρόν ποτε μήτε μετ' ἄλλον
μήτ' ἰδίῃ· πάντων δὲ μάλιστ' αἰσχύνεο σαντόν.
εἶτα δικαιοσύνην ἀσκεῖν ἔργῳ τε λόγῳ τε,
μηδ' ἀλογίστως σαντόν ἔχειν περὶ μηδὲν ἔθιζε,
ἀλλὰ γνῶθι μέν, ὥς θανέειν πέπρωται ἅπανσιν, 15
χρήματα δ' ἄλλοτε μὲν κτᾶσθαι φιλεῖ, ἄλλοτ' ὀλέσθαι.
ὅσσα δὲ δαιμονίαισι τύχαις βροτοὶ ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν,
ἦν ἂν μοῖραν ἔχῃς, ταύτην φέρε μηδ' ἀγανάκτει.
ἰᾶσθαι δὲ πρέπει καθ' ὅσον δύνῃ, ᾧδε δὲ φράζε·
οὐ πάννυ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τούτων πολὺ Μοῖρα δίδωσιν. 20
Πολλοὶ δ' ἀνθρώποισι λόγοι δειλοὶ τε καὶ ἐσθλοὶ
προσπίπτουσ', ᾧν μήτ' ἐκπλήσσειο μήτ' ἄρ' ἐάσης
εἵργεσθαι σαντόν. ψεῦδος δ' ἦν πέρ τι λέγεται,
πράως εἶχ'. ὃ δέ τοι ἐρέω, ἐπὶ παντὶ τελείσθω·
μηδεὶς μήτε λόγῳ σε παρείπη μήτε τι ἔργῳ 25
πρήξαι μηδ' εἰπεῖν, ὃ τί τοι μὴ βέλτερόν ἐστιν.
Βουλεύου δὲ πρὸ ἔργου, ὅπως μὴ μωρὰ πέληται·

PYTHAGOREAN GOLDEN VERSES

Honor the immortal gods first, in the order appointed by custom,

and revere your oath. Pay reverence next to the noble heroes and the spirits of the dead by performing the prescribed rites.

Honor your parents as well as their closest relatives.

Among others, choose as your friend him who excels in virtue. 5

Yield to his gentle words and useful actions, and do not hate your friend for a small fault, for as long as you are able to do so. For ability lives near necessity.

Know the above then, and accustom yourself to be master of the following:

first of all, of your stomach, of sleep, of lust, 10
and of anger. Never do anything shameful, neither with somebody else,

nor on your own. Feel shame before yourself most of all.

Furthermore, practice justice both in deed and in word, and accustom yourself not to be without thought about anything, but know that death has been destined for all, 15

and that property is wont to be acquired now, tomorrow lost.

But whatever pains mortals suffer through the divine workings of fate,

whatever lot you have, bear it and do not be angry.

It is fitting that it be healed as far as possible, and say to yourself as follows:

Fate does not give very many of these sufferings to the good. 20

Many words assail human beings, bad as well as good.

Do not be dumbfounded by them, nor allow

yourself to be hindered. If in fact something false is said,

withdraw amiably. Let what I shall tell you, however, be accomplished in every instance:

Let no one persuade you either by word or even by deed 25
to do or to say whatever is not best for you.

Deliberate before the deed, lest foolish things result from it.

δειλοῦ τοι πράσσειν τε λέγειν τ' ἀνόητα πρὸς ἀνδρός.
 ἀλλὰ τὰδ' ἐκτελέειν, ἅ σε μὴ μετέπειτ' ἀνιήσει.
 πρῶσσε δὲ μηδὲ ἐν ὧν μὴ ἐπίστασαι, ἀλλὰ διδάσκειν 30
 ὅσσα χρεῶν, καὶ τερπνότατον βίον ὧδε διάξεις.
 οὐ δ' ὑγείας τῆς περὶ σῶμ' ἀμέλειαν ἔχειν χρή,
 ἀλλὰ ποτοῦ τε μέτρον καὶ σίτου γυμνασίῳν τε
 ποιέσθαι. μέτρον δὲ λέγω τόδ', ὃ μὴ σ' ἀνιήσει.
 εἰθίζου δὲ δίκαιαν ἔχειν καθάρειον ἄθρυπτον 35
 καὶ πεφύλαξο τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν, ὅποσα φθόνον ἴσχει.
 μὴ δαπανᾶν παρὰ καιρὸν ὅποια καλῶν ἀδοτήμων
 μὴδ' ἀνελεύθερος ἴσθι. μέτρον δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστον.
 πρῶσσε δὲ ταῦθ', ἅ σε μὴ βλάβῃ, λόγισαι δὲ πρὸ ἔργου.
 Μὴ δ' ὕπνον μαλακοῖσιν ἐπ' ὄμμασι προσδέξασθαι, 40
 πρὶν τῶν ἡμερινῶν ἔργων τρὶς ἑκάστον ἐπελθεῖν·
 “πῇ παρέβην; τί δ' ἔρεξα; τί μοι δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη;”
 ἀρξάμενος δ' ἀπὸ πρώτου ἐπέξιθι καὶ μετέπειτα
 δειλὰ μὲν ἐκπρήξας ἐπιπλήσσει, χρηστὰ δὲ τέρπει.
 Ταῦτα πόνει, ταῦτ' ἐκμελέτα, τούτων χρή ἔρᾶν σε· 45
 ταυτά σε τῆς θεῆς Ἀρετῆς εἰς ἵχνια θήσει
 ναὶ μὰ τὸν ἀμετέρα ψυχῇ παραδόντα τετρακτύν,
 παγὰν ἀενάου φύσεως. ἀλλ' ἔρχευ ἐπ' ἔργον
 θεοῖσιν ἐπευξάμενος τελέσαι.
 Τούτων δὲ κρατήσας
 γνῶσσαι ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν θνητῶν τ' ἀνθρώπων 50
 σύστασιν, ἧ τε ἑκάστα διέρχεται, ἧ τε κρατεῖται.
 γνῶσθαι δ' ἡ θέμις ἐστί, φύσιν περὶ παντὸς ὁμοίην,
 ὥστε σε μήτε ἀελπτ' ἐλπίζειν μήτε τι λήθειν.
 γνῶσθαι δ' ἀνθρώπους αὐθαίρετα πῆματ' ἔχοντας

51 ἦ τε . . . ἦ τε M dett. Iamblichus Hierocles ἦ τε . . . ἦ τε V pauci dett. Arab.; fortasse ἦ
 τε . . . ἦ τε

It is typical of a worthless man indeed to do or to say senseless things.

But bring that to completion which will not distress you afterwards.

Do not do even one thing of what you do not understand, but learn 30

what is necessary, and thus you will lead a most enjoyable life.

You should not be careless about your physical health, but you should practice due measure in drinking, eating, and physical

exercises. By due measure I mean that which will not distress you.

Become accustomed to have a pure way of life, not an enervated one, 35

and guard against doing the kind of thing that incurs envy.

Do not spend money at the wrong time like someone ignorant of what is good,

nor be tight-fisted. Due measure is in everything the best.

Do that which will not harm you, and take thought before the deed.

Do not welcome sleep upon your soft eyes 40
before you have reviewed each of the day's deeds three times:

"Where have I transgressed? What have I accomplished? What duty have I neglected?"

Beginning from the first one go through them in detail, and then, if you have brought about worthless things, reprimand yourself, but if you have achieved good things, be glad.

Work hard at this, meditate on this, you should passionately desire this; 45

this will put you in the footsteps of divine Virtue, yes, by him who imparted to our soul the *tetraktys*, fount of ever-flowing nature. But to work! and pray to the gods to grant the fulfillment.

When you have mastered these things, you will come to know the essence of immortal gods and mortal men, 50

how it pervades each thing and how each thing is ruled [by it].

You will come to know, as is right, nature, alike in everything, so that you do not expect what is not to be expected, nor anything escape your notice.

You will come to know that the miseries men suffer are self-incurred

τλήμονας, οἷτ' ἀγαθῶν πέλας ὄντων οὐτ' ἐσορῶσιν 55
οὔτε κλύουσι, λύσιν δὲ κακῶν παῦροι συνιᾶσιν.
τοίη μοῖρ' αὐτῶν βλάπτει φρένας· ὥς δὲ κύλινδροι
ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλα φέρονται ἀπείρονα πῆματ' ἔχοντες.
λυγρὰ γὰρ συνοπαδὸς Ἴρις βλάπτουσα λέληθεν
σύμφυτος, ἣν οὐ δεῖ προάγειν, εἴκοντα δὲ φεύγειν. 60
Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ πολλῶν κε κακῶν λύσειας ἅπαντας,
εἰ πᾶσιν δείξαις, οἷψ τφ δαίμονι χρῶνται.
ἀλλὰ σὺ θάρσει, ἐπεὶ θεῖον γένος ἐστὶ βροτοῖσιν,
οἷς ἱερὰ προφέρουσα φύσις δείκνυσιν ἕκαστα.
Ἴν' εἴ σοί τι μέτεστι, κρατήσεις ὦν σε κελεύω 65
ἐξακέσας, ψυχὴν δὲ πόνων ἀπὸ τῶνδε σαώσεις.
ἀλλ' ἔργου βρωτῶν ὦν εἵπομεν ἔν τε Καθαρμοῖς
ἔν τε Λύσει ψυχῆς, κρίνων καὶ φράζεν ἕκαστα
ἡνίοχον γνώμην στήσας καθύπερθεν ἀρίστην.
ἦν δ' ἀπολείψας σῶμα ἐς αἰθέρ' ἐλεύθερον ἔλθης, 70
ἔσσεαι ἀθάνατος, θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός.

57 μοῖρ' αὐτῶν V dett. Arab. (?) Hierocles μοῖρα βρωτῶν M dett. Diehl-Young | οἱ δὲ κύλινδροις V dett. Hierocles in CA 24, lemma οἱ δὲ κύλινδροι M dett. Diehl-Young ὥς δὲ κύλινδροι Arab. (?) Mullach Nauck Horst; cf. etiam κυλινδρίοις εοικότας Iamblichus *Protr.* 3, p. 13.15; οἷον κύλινδροι Hierocles in CA 24.14, p. 101.11

61 κε Arab. Mullach Nauck Horst γε Diehl-Young τε codd. plerique Iamblichus Hierocles om. dett. pauci

the wretched people, who do not see the good even though it is
 near, 55
 nor do they hear it. Few understand the deliverance from their
 troubles.

Such is the fate that harms their minds: like tumbling stones
 they are borne hither and thither, suffering endless miseries.
 For a deadly innate companion, Discord, has injured them
 unawares. This one must not promote, but withdraw and flee from
 it. 60

Father Zeus, you would surely deliver all from many evils,
 if you would show all what kind of *daimon* they have.
 But take courage, for mortals have a divine origin,
 to whom Nature displays and shows each sacred object.

If you have any share in this, you will master what I command
 you by means of a thorough cure, 65
 and you will save your soul from these sufferings.

But keep away from food that we have mentioned in *Purifications*
 and in *Deliverance of the Soul*, with discernment, and consider
 each thing
 by putting the excellent faculty of judgment in control as
 charioteer.

Then, if you leave the body behind and go to the free *aither*, 70
 you will be immortal, an undying god, no longer mortal.

COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

A PRECEPTS TO BE MASTERED (GV 1–49a)

The *Golden Verses* begins its paraenesis with precepts concerning the addressee's relation toward gods and human beings (GV 1–8). This sets the external scene for his or her progress in virtue, the subject of the second section of the poem (GV 10–49a). In the last part of the poem (GV 49b–71), the poet once again returns to the problem of the relation between the human and the divine spheres, which is finally resolved by death.¹

1 Relationships with Other Beings and Persons (GV 1–8)

The first few precepts of the *Golden Verses* are closely related to the *ἄγραφοι νόμοι* ('unwritten laws'), especially in the form the latter were developed and systematized by rhetoricians and philosophers. The Stoics in particular expanded the *ἄγραφοι νόμοι* into a list of social duties which was very influential in the popular philosophy of the Hellenistic and early imperial period.² A representative version of such a list is provided by Plutarch: philosophy

¹ Cf. the three ways in which a man can 'improve' himself according to Anonymus Photii, p. 238.1–8 Thesleff: *πρώτον μὲν τῇ ὁμιλίᾳ τῇ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς (ἀνάγκη γὰρ προσίοντας αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ χωρίζεσθαι αὐτοὺς πάσης κακίας, εἰς δύναμιν ὁμοιοῦντας ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ), δεύτερον ἐν τῷ εὖ ποιεῖν (θεοῦ γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ θείας μιμήσεως), τρίτον ἐν τῷ ἀποθνήσκειν ...* ("in the first place by communion with the gods [for those who approach them have to distance themselves for that period from all evil, making themselves as far as possible like god], secondly by doing good [for this also is characteristic of god and of the imitation of the deity], thirdly by dying ...). This is very similar to the order of subjects treated in the *Golden Verses*.

² The basic study is that by Rudolf Hirzel, *ΑΓΡΑΦΟΙ ΝΟΜΟΙ* (Abhandlungen der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Classe 20/1; Leipzig: Teubner, 1900); see also T. Thalheim, "Ἀγραφοὶ νόμοι," *PW* 1 (1894) 889–90; Küchler, *Weisheitstraditionen*, 244–45. A good summary of the development into a list of social duties is to be found in James E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* (FRLANT 109; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), chaps. 2–5. Cf. also Peter Fiedler, "Haustafel," *RAC* 13 (1986) 1063–73; David L. Balch, "Household Codes," in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres* (ed. David E. Aune; SBLBS 21; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 25–50; Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists," 304–13 (with literature).

teaches us

that one ought to reverence the gods, to honour one's parents, to respect one's elders, to be obedient to the laws, to yield to those in authority, to love one's friends, to be chaste with women, to be affectionate with children, and not to be overbearing with slaves; and, most important of all, not to be overjoyful at success or overmuch distressed at misfortune, nor to be dissolute in pleasures, nor impulsive and brutish in temper. (Plutarch *De liber. educ.* 7e; trans. F. C. Babbitt, LCL)

The similarities to the *Golden Verses*, especially GV 1–20, are obvious. We may also compare the sections of Hierocles the Stoic's work on duties: it deals with duties toward gods, country, parents, brothers, and other relatives; it contains a section on the government of the household and on marriage; it probably also treated duties toward people who do not belong to the family; and finally, it contains a section on duties toward oneself.³

1.1 Vertical Relationships (GV 1–4)

The first section of the poem (GV 1–8) is demarcated by means of a connecting sentence in GV 9 which refers to the preceding precepts (ταῦτα), as well as to those that follow (τῶνδε).⁴ This first section may again be divided into two or three subsections. The cohesion of the first subsection (GV 1–4) is based on the chiasm *τίμα–σέβου–σέβε–τίμα*; the theme is *εὐσέβεια*, piety. With GV 5, however, a related, though clearly different, topos is introduced, namely, that of friendship. This shift is also signalled by the use of the imperative *ποιεῖν* instead of a word belonging to the semantic field of piety.

GV 1–4

ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα θεούς, νόμῳ ὡς διάκεινται,
τίμα καὶ σέβου ὄρκον. ἔπειθ' ἥρωας ἀγανούς
τούς τε καταχθονίους σέβε δαίμονας ἔννομα ῥέζων·
σοὺς τε γονεῖς τίμα τούς τ' ἄγχιστ' ἐγγεγάωτας.

Honor the immortal gods first, in the order appointed by custom,
and revere your oath. Pay reverence next to the noble heroes
and the spirits of the dead by performing the prescribed rites.

³ See H. von Arnim, ed., *Hierokles: Ethische Elementarlehre (Papyrus 9780)* (Berliner Klassikertexte 4; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1906) xi–xii.

⁴ Cf. a similar use of *τούτων κρατήσας* in GV 49b and of *κρατήσεις ὧν σε κελεύω* in GV 65b.

Honor your parents as well as their closest relatives.

One may wish to subdivide *GV* 1–4 into two clusters, namely, *GV* 1–3 and *GV* 4. Two considerations speak for this division; the first is semantic, the second formal. Semantically we may want to differentiate between supernatural and human beings. We also have a kind of *epiphora* formed by νόμῳ ὥς διάκεινται (*GV* 1b) and ἔννομα ῥέζων (*GV* 3b), which may set these three verses apart. On the whole, however, these considerations are overridden by the chiasm (τίμα–σέβου–σέβε–τίμα), as well as by the strong syntactic parallelism between *GV* 2b–3 and 4.

A further compositional feature is the pairing off of the objects of worship, namely, θεούς–ῥρκον, ἥρωας–δαίμονας, and γονεῖς–ἐγγεγάωτας. This serves to mark off three levels, namely, the divine, the human, and an intermediate level made up of heroes and *daimones*.⁵

The subjects treated in the first four verses of the poem would have been familiar to any Greek or Roman from antiquity: gods, oaths, heroes, *daimones*, parents and family, all fell within the sphere of traditional piety.⁶ It is furthermore not uncommon to find the topos of εὐσέβεια at the very beginning of a gnomic text.⁷ What is distinctive about the *Golden Verses* has to do with the way these subjects are presented.

Divine beings and men must first of all be honored in a definite order of priority: gods first, then heroes and *daimones*, finally parents and relations.⁸ The idea of a hierarchical order of rational

⁵ In the New Testament, we find a comparable three-level division into God, Christ, and man; cf. 1 Cor 11:3.

⁶ See Dieter Kaufmann-Bühler, "Eusebeia," *RAC* 6 (1966) 985–1052, esp. 986.

⁷ Cf., e.g., *Hypothekai of Cheiron* = Hesiod frg. 283 Merkelbach and West; [Isocrates] *Demonic*. 13–14; Chares frg. 1.1–7; ἄγραφοι νόμοι ap. Plutarch *De liber. educ.* 7.7e; *Vit. Aesop.* 109; cf. also Epicurus *Kyriai Doxai* 1 (ap. Diogenes Laertius 10.139). See Wefelmeier, *Sentenzensammlung der Demonicea*, 78–82. Iamblichus also begins his discussion of Pythagoras' teachings on virtues with a section on his piety (*VP* 134). Cf. esp. his very first sentence: ἀρεξώμεθα δὲ πρῶτον ἀπὸ θεῶν ὡς περ καὶ νομίζεται....

⁸ The order is emphasized by the use of μὲν πρῶτα ... ἔπειθ'. This combination is very common in both prose and verse; see J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1954) 376–77. There is no real textual evidence for the reading *διάκεινται* proposed by Arcerius, and followed by van der Horst and Young. The early Arabic translation of the *Golden Verses* may be based on a reading like *διάκεινται*, but this evidence is not clear enough (see Rosenthal, "Pythagorean Documents," 114). The main difficulty with the plural form is that it seems to presuppose a hierarchical division of the immortal gods which did not take place until Neopythagorean times (so van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 4); cf., e.g., the interpretation of Hierocles *ad loc.* (in *CA* 1). According to this interpretation the clause νόμῳ ὥς διάκεινται qualifies only ἀθανάτους ... θεούς. However, the emphasis in *GV* 1 is on

beings was attributed to the Pythagoreans at least from the time of Aristoxenus (fl. 336 BC), the usual sequence being gods–*daimones*–heroes–men.⁹ This hierarchy, already common in Plato,¹⁰ became systematized through the efforts of Xenocrates and was even expanded in Middle and Neoplatonic theology.¹¹ The context of these first verses, however, is not theology, but worship. What is at stake, is not the intellectual ability to distinguish accurately between various genera of deities (as is the case, e.g., in Iamblichus), but having the correct religious priorities.¹²

πρώτα, followed by ἔπειθ' in GV 2. GV 1-4 can thus be taken to mean, "Honor the immortal gods in the customary order, i.e., first, then worship the heroes and *daimones*, your parents and relatives" (cf. Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 15: "dans l'ordre qui leur est assignée par la loi"). What is involved in these first few verses, is to delineate a hierarchical order of beings and persons worthy of honor and worship, from the immortal gods down to parents and family. See also Augusto Rostagni, review of *Les vers d'or pythagoriciens*, by van der Horst, *RFIC* n.s. 9 (1933) 87-88.

⁹ See Aristoxenus frgs. 33, 34 Wehrli; Diogenes Laertius 8.23; Porphyry *VP* 38; Iamblichus *VP* 31, 37, 100, 144; cf. also Aristotle frg. 192 Rose; Zaleucus *Prooem.*, p. 227.23-25 Thesleff; [Archytas] *De leg.*, p. 34.28-29 Thesleff. According to Plutarch *De def. or.* 10.415b, Hesiod introduced this distinction. This series occurs often in Plato; see *Resp.* 392a, 427b (in both cases Plato adds a reference to those in Hades as well); *Leg.* 717ab (where we find the series Olympian, civic, and chthonian gods, *daimones*, heroes, ancestral deities, and parents), 738d, 801d, 818c, 910a. The three-term gradation gods–*daimones*–men is indeed also attributed to Thales and to Stoics in the doxographical handbooks (cf. Aëtius 1.7.11, 1.8.2; Plutarch *De Is. et Os.* 25.360e; Athenagoras *Leg.* 23.4). For skepticism concerning the Pythagorean origin of this gradation see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 73-74.

¹⁰ See preceding footnote.

¹¹ See Richard Heinze, *Xenokrates: Darstellung der Lehre und Sammlung der Fragmente* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1892; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), esp. 78-123; J. den Boeft, *Calcidius on Demons (Commentarius Ch. 127-136)* (Philosophia Antiqua 33; Leiden: Brill, 1977), esp. 52-65; Dillon, "Iamblichus of Chalcis," 899-902. Cf. also Hierocles in *CA* 1, 3.4-8. See in general Gerard O'Daly, "Hierarchie," *RAC* 15 (1991) 41-73.

¹² This is indeed true of most of the references given in n. 9 above, including those to Plato. Cf. also the intriguing inscription from Dodona (*Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften* [ed. H. Collitz; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1899] 2.1582a = C. Michel, *Recueil d'inscriptions grecques* [Brussels, 1900] 845):

Θε(ο)ί. Τύχην ἀγαθάν. Ἐπικουρήται Εὐβαν-
δρος καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῶι Διεὶ τῶι Νάωι καὶ τῶι Δι-
ῶναι, τίμι κα φεῶν ἡ ἡρώων ἡ δαιμόνων
εὐχόμενοι καὶ φύοντες λῶϊον καὶ ἄμεινο-
ν πράσσειεν καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἡ οἰκῆσις καὶ νῦν
καὶ ἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον.

The gods. Good fortune. Evander and
his wife ask Zeus Naos and Dione
to whom of the gods or heroes or *daimones*
they should pray and sacrifice to prosper,
both they themselves and their household,
now and for all time.

See on this inscription Victor Goldschmidt, "Théologia," *REG* 63 (1950) 20-42, esp. 31.

This protocol of worship is based, according to Pythagoras in his speech to the young men of Croton, on the principle of *seniores priores* (πρεσβύτερον τιμιώτερον).¹³ The order of priority may in fact have corresponded to a temporal sequence of worship as well: one sacrificed to the Olympian gods in the morning, to the heroes in the afternoon, and to the spirits in the evening or at night.¹⁴

1 Pythagoreans laid great emphasis on piety toward the gods. Worshiping the gods was the first and basic principle of their way of life. In a passage in Iamblichus which may go back to Aristoxenus their position is stated as follows:

ἅπαντα ὅσα περὶ τοῦ πράττειν ἢ μὴ πράττειν διορίζουσιν ἐστόχασται τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ὁμολογίας, καὶ ἀρχὴ αὕτη ἐστὶ καὶ βίος ἅπας συντέτακται πρὸς τὸ ἀκολουθεῖν τῷ θεῷ.

All the rules they define for action or refraining from action are devised with a view to our relationship with the divine. This is their principle. All of life is ordered with the object of following god.¹⁵

This was probably true throughout the history of the Pythagorean tradition.¹⁶

Pythagorean worship of the gods was at the same time conservative and reformatory. The gods should be worshiped according

¹³ Ap. Iamblichus VP 37: [ἀποφαίνει] μᾶλλον τιμώμενον τὸ προηγούμενον ἢ τὸ τῷ χρόνῳ ἐπόμενον, οἷον ... τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς τῶν δαιμόνων, ἐκείνους δὲ τῶν ἡμιθέων, τοὺς ἥρωας δὲ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐκ τούτων δὲ τοὺς αἰτίους τῆς γενέσεως τῶν νεωτέρων ("He demonstrated that what precedes in time is more honorable than what follows: for example, ... the gods are more honorable than daemons, and the latter more than demigods, and heroes more than humans. And among the latter, those responsible for birth are more honorable than their offspring"; trans. John Dillon and Jackson Hershbell, *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Way of Life* [SBLTT 29; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991]). Cf. also Diogenes Laertius 8.22–23. On this whole speech see de Vogel, *Pythagoras*, 70–106.

¹⁴ Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston: Beacon, 1950) 222: "Time of day: sacrifice to the Olympians was performed in the morning sunshine, to the chthonians in the evening or at dead of night"; cf. also Alexander Polyhistor *Pythagorean Memoirs* ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.33: heroes are to be worshiped only in the afternoon.

¹⁵ Iamblichus VP 137 (cf. also VP 86); trans. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 348–49. For Aristoxenus as source see DK 58D2; followed by Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.199; Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 349. However, it has not been included in the collection by Fritz Wehrli (*Die Schule des Aristoteles. Texte und Kommentar 2: Aristoxenos* [2d ed.; Basel: Schwabe, 1967]).

¹⁶ See Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.199 n. 2.

to ancestral custom, a commonplace in Greek religion.¹⁷ On the other hand, they stressed the importance of correct ritual practices, as many of the *akousmata* indicate.¹⁸ Among their reforms would be the emphasis on bloodless sacrifice.¹⁹ It is improbable that the early Pythagoreans prohibited animal sacrifice altogether, even if this would be the logical consequence of the doctrine of metempsychosis, since this would be in complete conflict with the traditional worship.²⁰ In the Neopythagorean period, however, somebody like Apollonius of Tyana considered it his duty to reform religious practices, which included avoiding animal sacrifices.²¹ The Pythagoreans further stressed the importance of physical and spiritual purity in worship.²² This entailed wearing

¹⁷ This is stated explicitly in GV 1 if we accept the emendation to *διάκειται*, otherwise still implied by *νόμῳ* and *ἐννομία* (GV 3). In the context of piety, *νόμος* equals *τὸ πάτριον* or *τὰ πάτρια*; cf. van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 7. Adherence to ancestral customs with respect to religion is also emphasized in other texts on Pythagoreanism; cf. Aristoxenus frgs. 33, 34 Wehrli; Zaleucus *Proem.*, p. 227.23-25 Thesleff; Perictione *De mul. harm.*, p. 144.5-6 Thesleff. For Greek religion in general cf., e.g., Isocrates *Areopag.* 29-30: *εὐσέβεια* is "not to change anything that the ancestors handed down"; [Aristotle] *De virt. et vit.* 1250b; Porphyry *Marc.* 18: "For this is the principal fruit of piety: to honor the divine in the traditional ways" (trans. Kathleen O'Brien Wicker, *Porphyry the Philosopher: To Marcella* [SBLTT 28; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987] 61); *CIG* 5041.4-5: "Consider first the ancestral gods, and worship them...." See Kaufmann-Bühler, "Eusebeia," 1003-4; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 272-75; Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 2-4. Even philosophers critical of traditional ritual practices (e.g., Plato, Epicurus, Epictetus, Porphyry) kept to this dictum; see Kaufmann-Bühler, "Eusebeia," 1004; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 321; Édouard des Places, *Porphyre: Vie de Pythagore, Lettre à Marcella* (Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982) 116 n. 2; Wicker, *Porphyry*, 106.

¹⁸ See Iamblichus VP 85: the *akousmata* are mostly concerned *περί τε θυσίας καθ' ἐκάστους τοὺς καιροὺς πῶς χρὴ ποιέσθαι τὰς τε ἄλλας <θεῶν τιμὰς>*; also Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 174, 183 n. 123. For a collection and discussion of *akousmata* dealing specifically with religious worship, see Friedrich Boehm, "De symbolis Pythagoreis" (Diss. Berlin, 1905) 8-14.

¹⁹ Diogenes Laertius 8.20: *θυσίας τε ἐχρήτο ἀψύχοις*; 8.22: *σφάγια τε θεοῖς προσφέρειν κωλύειν, μόνον δὲ τὸν ἀνάιμακτον βωμὸν προσκυνεῖν*; cf. also Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 9.128; Iamblichus VP 54. This practice was not unknown in the classical period; the three laws of Triptolemus at Eleusis commanded *γονεῖς τιμᾶν, θεοὺς καρποῖς ἀγάλλειν, ζῶα μὴ σίνεσθαι* ("Honor parents, pay honor to the gods with fruits, do not harm animals"; Xenocrates frg. 98 Heinze = Porphyry *Abst.* 4.22); cf. also Theophrastus *De pietate*, passim. On the similarities between Pythagoreanism and mystery cults, including that of Eleusis, see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 177-85.

²⁰ See Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 182. See further the commentary on GV 67 below.

²¹ See Philostratus VA 1.1, 31; 5.25; 8.7.10; Apollonius of Tyana *Ep.* 26, 27; Περὶ θυσίων ap. Eusebius *Praep. Evang.* 4.13.1; G. Petzke, *Die Traditionen über Apollonius von Tyana und das Neue Testament* (SCHNT 1; Leiden: Brill, 1970) 207-13; Robert J. Penella, ed., *The Letters of Apollonius of Tyana* (Mnemosyne Supplement 56; Leiden: Brill, 1979) 105.

²² Physical purity, i.e., not to be ritually polluted, was stressed by the Delphic priest-

white linen and avoiding ritual pollution,²³ as well as having the right mental state.²⁴

ἄθάνατοι θεοί is here more than a stereotyped way of referring to the gods. The opposition mortal-immortal is at work throughout the *Golden Verses* (cf. *GV* 15, 17, 50, 63, 71); the poem culminates in the promise that the initiate may be transformed into an ἄθάνατος θεός (*GV* 71). This is indeed a promise that seems to contradict one of the basic principles of Greek religion, namely, the radical opposition between the divine and mortal spheres.²⁵ There were precedents, however, which saw in the relation between man and god an element of mutual implication. Hierocles, in his commentary on *GV* 1, refers to men as 'mortal gods' (θνητοὶ θεοί) who have to regain their immortality (in *CA* 1.5). This designation is an allusion to Heraclitus, who spoke of the gods as ἄθάνατοι θνητοί ('immortal mortals') and of men as θνητοὶ ἁθά-

hood from a very early period. Moral purity, to be worthy of the god, became a prerequisite perhaps as early as the 6th century BC; see Heinrich Dörrie, "Überlegungen zum Wesen antiker Frömmigkeit," in *Pietas: Festschrift für Bernhard Kötting* (ed. Ernst Dassmann and K. Suso Frank; JbAC Ergänzungsband 8; Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1980) 3–14, esp. 7–8. Cf. also in general Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), esp. chap. 10.

²³ See Herodotus 2.81; Isocrates *Bus.* 28; Eudoxus ap. Porphyry *VP* 7; Diogenes Laertius 8.19; Iamblichus *VP* 100 (probably from Aristoxenus—cf. P. Boyancé, "Sur la vie pythagoricienne," *REG* 52 [1939] 36–50; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 165 n. 249); *VP* 153. The sources are divided as to whether Pythagoreans took a bath or not: *akousma* no. 45 Boehm (ap. Iamblichus *VP* 83) prohibits the use of public baths, and the 'Pythagorists' of Middle Comedy refused to wash (cf. Alexis frg. 197 Kock; Aristophon frgs. 13, 9, 12 Kock), but the Pythagoreans known to Aristoxenus (ap. Iamblichus *VP* 98) did bathe; see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, General Index, s.v. 'Baths.' To bathe or not to bathe is of course a concern in other religious traditions as well; cf. *Cologne Mani Codex* 94–96.

²⁴ 'Mental purity' meant not only to have the right attitude when taking part in ritual acts (cf. Porphyry *VP* 38: προσκυνεῖν δὲ μὴ ἐκ παρέργου τοὺς θεούς, ἀλλ' οἰκοθεν ἐπὶ τοῦτο ὠρμημένοις, "Do not worship the gods in passing, but having set out from your home for this purpose"; also Aristoxenus frgs. 33, 34 Wehrli), but even more to become like the god by being pure of all evil; cf. Anonymus Photii, p. 238.1–8 Thesleff (quoted n. 1 above); Hierocles in *CA* 1.16–18, esp. 1.17: ὡς γὰρ φασιν οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι, τιμήσεις τὸν θεὸν ἄριστα, ἐὰν τῷ θεῷ τὴν διάνοιαν ὁμοιώσης ("For as the Pythagoreans say, you will honor god best, if you make your thought like god"); cf. also Iamblichus *Protr.* 2, p. 10.1–3: τὸν θεὸν σέβομεθα κατὰ τρόπον, εἰ τὸν ἐν ἡμῖν νοῦν παρασκευάσαιμεν πάσης κακίας ὥσπερ τινὸς κηλίδος καθαρόν ("We worship god correctly, if we would keep the mind in us pure from all evil as from a defilement"). For the Pythagorean notion of καθαρὸς βίος as prerequisite for cult and ritual, see Dörrie, "Überlegungen," 8–14.

²⁵ See Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 201: "What is unique about the Greek tradition is the radical and thoroughgoing way in which the opposition between the realm of the gods and the realm of the dead was worked out. The gods are the immortals, *athanatoi*; the epithet becomes a definition.... But as for men, they move towards death as mortals, *brotoi*, *thnetoi*."

νᾶτοι ('mortal immortals').²⁶

2 Keeping your oath is considered an integral part of piety in Greco-Roman thought.²⁷ Perjury is in fact considered the chief offense against the gods.²⁸ It is therefore not surprising that it is linked so closely to worshipping the gods in this context.²⁹ What is unusual, however, is the verb used, namely, *σέβου*, 'pay reverence.' The oath is almost personified into an object of worship.³⁰ This is done in order to emphasize the sacredness of an oath. Oaths are related to the gods in the following way: When one takes an oath, a god is called upon to vouch for the truth of the oath. If the oath is not kept, however, the god is implicated in one's transgression. To avoid abusing the gods, it is therefore best not to swear by the gods at all. This leaves us with the paradox that the best way to keep an oath is to avoid it altogether. One should rather speak the truth without using an oath, since one has to be inherently trustworthy even without being bound by an

²⁶ Heraclitus frg. 62 DK. Heraclitus himself may be reinterpreting an Orphic doctrine about the alternation of life and death; cf. the inscription *βίος θάνατος βίος* on one of the bone plates found at Olbia. See Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 208 n. 1; also West, *Orphic Poems*, 17–20, on the bone plates and their relation to Pythagoreanism. For a discussion of Heraclitus frg. 62 and its interpretation in antiquity see Jean Pépin, *Idées grecques sur l'homme et sur dieu* (Collection d'études anciennes; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971) 34–51.

²⁷ See Kaufmann-Bühler, "Eusebeia," 986; cf. also [Isocrates] *Demonic*. 13: sacrifice is a merely external expression of piety, while keeping your oath is a sign of the nobility of your character. On the oath in antiquity in general, see Rudolf Hirzel, *Der Eid: Ein Beitrag zu seiner Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1902; reprint, Aalen: Scientia, 1966); Leopold Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen* (2 vols.; Berlin: Hertz, 1882; reprint, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1964) 2.3–10; Johannes Schneider, "ὁμνῶ," *TDNT* 5.176–85; idem, "ὄρκος κτλ.," *TDNT* 5.457–67.

²⁸ See Albrecht Dieterich, *Nekyia: Beiträge zur Erklärung der neuentdeckten Petrus-apokalypse* (2d ed.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1913; reprint, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969) 164; cf. also Schmidt, *Ethik der Griechen* 2.3.

²⁹ Pace Nauck, "Über die goldenen Sprüche," 477: "Welcher vernünftige Mensch wird eine Verbindung wagen, wie sie hier vorliegt, zuerst halte die Götter hoch und ehre den Eid, sodann ehre die Heroen und unterirdischen Mächte?" See also idem, "De aureo carmine," 210. Nauck's surprise is criticized by Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 15; see also van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 4. The same juxtaposition of immortal gods and one's oath is to be found in Theognis 1139–40.

³⁰ The oath cited (with some changes) in GV 47–48 probably played an important part in the initiation of Pythagoreans, when they had to promise to keep all their doctrines secret. This oath may have circulated separately as a couplet called "ὄρκος: see Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 249–68; Thesleff, *Pythagorean Texts*, 170. The term ὄρκος in GV 2 seems to have a more general reference, however. For a similar use of *σέβω/σέβομαι*, with *δίκην* as object, cf. Euripides *Supp.* 594–95; Plato *Leg.* 777d.

oath.³¹ Pythagoras himself taught that being truthful is the only way human beings can approximate God.³²

2–3 Heroes and *daimones* should be worshiped next after the gods. As we have seen above, the worship of heroes and *daimones* figure prominently in testimonies concerning Pythagorean piety.³³ Cobet and Nauck have criticized the sequence gods–heroes–*daimones* in *GV* 1–3, since it differs from that found in other sources, namely, gods–*daimones*–heroes.³⁴ What has escaped their notice, however, is the fact that *daimones* are here qualified by *καταχθονίους*; it is therefore not *daimones* in general that concerns the author.³⁵ As will be argued below, in this context *daimones* probably means the souls of the dead. Heroes and *daimones* here refer collectively to those who have died, or rather to those who have passed through death.³⁶

The worship of heroes is attested from a fairly early period in Greece.³⁷ In Athens, Dracon (ca. 620 BC) ordained that the gods and the indigenous heroes should be honored together according to ancestral usage.³⁸ Hero cults were usually very much localized, since they were bound to the hero's grave. The cult of some

³¹ See Diogenes Laertius 8.22; Iamblichus *VP* 144, 150; cf. also Diodorus 10.9.1. Jesus taught very much the same thing; see Matt 5:33–37. Cf. also Epictetus *Ench.* 33.5. Pythagoreans avoided using a god's name (including that of Pythagoras) as well as wearing a ring with the image of a god on it. The same circumspect attitude toward the name and image of God is commanded in the Decalogue (Exod 20:4, 7; Deut 5:8, 11). See Schneider, "ὁμνῶ," 176–85 (on Jesus' views); also 178–80 (on Greeks, including Pythagoreans, Esenes, and Philo).

³² Porphyry *VP* 41; cf. Iamblichus *VP* 155.

³³ See Aristoxenus frgs. 33, 34 Wehrli; Diogenes Laertius 8.23; Porphyry *VP* 38; Iamblichus *VP* 31, 37, 100, 144; cf. also Aristotle frg. 192 Rose; Zaleucus *Prooem.* p. 227.23–25 Thesleff; [Archytas] *De leg.*, p. 34.28–29 Thesleff.

³⁴ Cobet, *Collectanea critica*, 463–64; Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 224. According to Delatte, the sequence is not all that important; heroes and *daimones* are placed on the same hierarchical level, without differentiating between them (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 48). However, in the light of the overwhelming evidence in favor of the sequence *daimones*–heroes (Iamblichus *VP* 31 is the only exception), the sequence is surely more important than Delatte thinks.

³⁵ For van der Horst also the addition of *καταχθονίους* changes the meaning of *δαίμονας* (*Vers d'or*, 5–7), although his interpretation differs from mine; see the discussion below.

³⁶ This is a very important topic of the *akousmata*; cf. Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 185–86, esp. 185: "It is striking how constantly attention is oriented toward the world of the dead, the heroes, and the *δαίμονες*."

³⁷ See Rohde, *Psyche* 1.146; Lewis Richard Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921), passim; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 203–8; Wolfgang Speyer, "Heros," *RAC* 14 (1988) 861–77.

³⁸ See Porphyry *Abst.* 4.22; also Rohde, *Psyche* 1.146.

heroes (e.g., Heracles and the Dioscuri), however, became more widespread.³⁹ Heroes formed an intermediate class between gods and men; having died (as the existence of their graves bore witness) they could not have been gods, but because of their origin (i.e., as the product of the union between a god or goddess and a human being) or extraordinary abilities they were clearly more than human. As such they were entitled to worship and they were able to offer the community in the vicinity of their graves special protection and assistance.⁴⁰ In the Hellenistic period there developed a tendency to 'heroicize' every deceased, something very rare in an earlier period.⁴¹

On the other hand, "we must remember that the term *ἥρωας* often meant 'minor deity' and not 'man who lived and died and subsequently received veneration.'" ⁴² In later times this term could therefore be used to indicate a rational being of the 'middle species,' that is, occupying a position between god and man. In this sense, *ἥρωας* represents both the categories *δαίμων* and *ἥρωας* found in hierarchical lists.⁴³

Pythagoreans had a particular interest in Heracles, whom they regarded as a paragon of virtue, while the Dioscuri may also have been honored in certain circles.⁴⁴ According to a testimony in Iamblichus which Thesleff assigns to a Latin *Ἱερὸς λόγος*, Pythagoras "required that libations be made before dinner to Zeus the deliverer, and to Heracles and the Dioscuri, celebrating ... Heracles as the power of nature [*τὴν δύνανμιν τῆς φύσεως*], and the Dioscuri as the harmony of all things [*τὴν συμφωνίαν τῶν πάντων*]" ⁴⁵ Heracles and the Dioscuri are allegorized into natu-

³⁹ See Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 206, 208-13; Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 95-228.

⁴⁰ See Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 343; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 206; Speyer, "Heros," 869-70.

⁴¹ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 206; Speyer, "Heros," 868-69. See also Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 343-44; and Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 204, on the relation between hero and ancestor cults.

⁴² Arthur Darby Nock, "The Cult of Heroes," *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (ed. Zeph Stewart; 2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 2.575-602; quotation from p. 593.

⁴³ Cf. Hierocles in *CA* 3.6-7.

⁴⁴ Cf. Iamblichus *VP* 40, 50, 155, 222. See also Marcel Detienne, "Héraclès, héros pythagoricien," *RHR* 158 (1960) 19-53; idem, *Homère, Hésiode et Pythagore: Poésie et philosophie dans le pythagorisme ancien* (Collection Latomus 57; Bruxelles-Berchem: Latomus, 1962) 82-93.

⁴⁵ Iamblichus *VP* 155 = Pythagoras *Hier. log. Lat.*, p. 168.3-6 Thesleff; trans. Dillon and Hershbell, *Pythagoras*, 169, 171.

ral forces. The interest here seems to be more general, however: On the one hand, heroes were traditionally connected with the gods; together they constituted the sphere of the sacred.⁴⁶ It is therefore to be expected that they will be mentioned in a section on piety. On the other hand, heroes formed a link in the chain between the immortal gods and mortal men trying to regain their immortality, since heroes occupied a privileged position in the world of the dead.⁴⁷

The term *δαίμων* is of immense importance in the history of Greek religion; its meaning and history is too complex, however, to be sensibly discussed here.⁴⁸ The combination of *δαίμων* with the epithet *καταχθόνιος* narrows the scope of possible meanings considerably, and the discussion will therefore be limited to this phrase.

Although neither *καταχθόνιος* nor *δαίμων* are rare terms, their combination occurs less often than one may expect.⁴⁹ If we in-

⁴⁶ See Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 205.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 213: "The Dioskouroi ... were seen as guiding lights for those hoping to break out of the mortal sphere into the realm of the gods."

⁴⁸ On the meaning of *δαίμων* in general, see J. A. Hild, "Daemon," *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines d'après les textes et les monuments* (ed. Charles Daremberg and Edmond Saglio; Paris: Hachette, 1877-1919) 2.1.9-19; Otto Waser, "Daimon," *PW* 4 (1901) 2010-12; Andres, "Daimon," *PWSup* 3 (1918) 267-322; Werner Foerster, "δαίμων," *TDNT* 2.1-20 (see also the literature cited in *TWNT* 10.2, s.v. *δαίμων* κτλ.); Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* 1.216-22, 2.210-13; Herbert Nowak, "Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Begriffs Daimon: Eine Untersuchung epigraphischer Zeugnisse vom 5. Jh. v. Chr. bis zum 5. Jh. n. Chr." (Diss. Bonn, 1960); Carsten Colpe et al., "Geister (Dämonen)," *RAC* 9 (1976) 546-797, esp. 598-615, 615-25, 640-68; Jonathan Z. Smith, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity," *ANRW* II.16.1 (1978) 425-39; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 179-81, 331-32; Frederick E. Brenk, "In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period," *ANRW* II.16.3 (1986) 2068-2145. For the meaning of *δαίμων* within the framework of Pythagoreanism, see M. Detienne, *De la pensée religieuse à la pensée philosophique: La notion de 'daímōn' dans le Pythagorisme ancien* (Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège 165; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1963); as well as the fairly critical review by Walter Burkert in *Gnomon* 36 (1964) 563-67; also Brenk, "In the Light of the Moon," 2094-98. The summary of the Pythagorean position by Theodor Hopfner is still useful (*Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber* [2 vols.; Studien zur Palaeographie und Papyruskunde 21, 23/1; Leipzig, 1921-24; reprint, Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1974-83], vol. 1, § 15).

⁴⁹ Cf., e.g., *Anthologia Graeca* 7.333: *μηδὲ καταχθονίους μετὰ δαίμοσιν ἄμμορος εἶης ἡμετέρων δώρων*; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Ant. Rom.* 6.89.4: *τοὺς θεοὺς τοὺς οὐρανίους ἵλεως εἶναι καὶ δαίμονας τοὺς καταχθονίους*; the Brouzos imprecation (ed. W. M. Ramsay, "Les trois villes phrygiennes: Brouzos, Hieropolis et Ostrous," *BCH* 6 [1882] 516): *ἐνορκίζομεθα τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς καταχθονίους δαίμονας*; *PGM* 1.254: *ἀνάσθηθι, δαίμων καταχθόνιε ..., ὃ ἐὰν ἐπιτάξω ὑμῖν ἐγὼ ὃ δεῖναι, ὅπως ἐπήκοοι μοι γένησθε*; also 4.2088. Cf. also the references in Bauer-Aland, s.v. *καταχθόνιος*.

clude related phrases, such as *χθόνιοι δαίμονες*, *ὑποχθόνιοι δαίμονες*, or even *καταχθόνιοι θεοί*, many more examples may be added, although one should keep in mind that *χθόνιος* and *ὑπο-* or *καταχθόνιος* are not always exact synonyms,⁵⁰ nor, of course, are *δαίμων* and *θεός*. The phrase *καταχθόνιοι δαίμονες* (or variants) has three possible interpretations, namely, (a) gods of the underworld, that is, deities like Hades, Persephone, Demeter, Hekate, and the Erinyes; (b) spirits of the underworld, unspecified beings occupying a position between gods and men, to whom the task of watching over and punishing men is often relegated; and (c) souls of the dead. All three interpretations can be substantiated from ancient literature and inscriptions;⁵¹ all of them are also reflected in the history of research on the *Golden Verses*.⁵² Of these three, (b) occupies a middle position and is not always readily distinguishable from (a) or (c).⁵³ The use of the term

⁵⁰ Cf. Porphyry *De antr. nymph.* 6: τοῖς μὲν Ὀλυμπίοις θεοῖς ναοὺς τε καὶ ἔδη καὶ βωμοὺς ἰδρύσαντο, χθόνιους δὲ καὶ ἥρωσιν ἐσχάρας, ὑποχθόνιους δὲ βόθρους καὶ μέγαλα.

⁵¹ For (a), cf. Aeschylus *Pers.* 631; *Die Inschriften von Assos* (ed. Reinhold Merkelbach; IK 4; Bonn: Habelt, 1976) 71.10-11; *SIG* 1239; Charondas *Proem.*, p. 62.8-11 Thesleff; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Ant. Rom.* 6.89.4; the Brouzos imprecation (see n. 49 above)—although the last three references would also fit (b); see also Nowak, "Entwicklungsgeschichte," 20-22; S. Eitrem, "Katachthonioi Theoi," *PW* 10 (1919) 2454-55. For (b), cf. *Die Inschriften von Smyrna 1* (ed. Georg Petzl; IK 23/1; Bonn: Habelt, 1982) 210.10-13; *SIG* 1241; Timaeus Locrus *De univ. nat.* 87, p. 225.5-7 Thesleff; Heliodorus *Aethiop.* 8.9.12 Rattenbury, Lumb, and Maillon = 8.9.74-75 Colonna: δαίμονες ἐπὶ γῆς τε καὶ ὑπὸ γῆν ἀνθρώπων ἀθεμίτων ἔφοροι τε καὶ τιμωροί; *PGM* 1.254, 4.2088; Theano *Ep. Pyth.* 11, p. 184.9-10 Städele = p. 200.24 Thesleff—although these last three references may also fit (c); see also Colpe et al., "Geister (Dämonen)," 604-10. For (c), cf. *Anthologia Graeca* 7.333; Gold Leaves A1-3 (ed. Günther Zuntz, *Persephone: Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1971] 277-393) (= Orphic frg. 32c-e Kern), lines 1-2; *Hymni Orphici* 29.6 (*καταχθονίων*, ed. Abel; *ὑποχθονίων*, ed. Quandt); see also Hild, "Daemon," 16; Eitrem, "Katachthonioi Theoi"; Foerster, "δαίμων," *TDNT* 2.6-8; Nowak, "Entwicklungsgeschichte," 43-46; Colpe et al., "Geister (Dämonen)," 610-15.

⁵² Interpretation a is defended by van der Horst (*Vers d'or*, 5: "les dieux du royaume des ombres"). Subsequent scholars following van der Horst are Pantelakes (*ΧΡΤΕΑ ΕΙΠΗ*, 43); Schröder ("Nobele geest," 87); and van der Waerden (*Pythagoreer*, 149). For the more neutral (b), see Mullach, *FPG* 1.193 (*terrestres genios*); also Pesenti, *Versi aurei*, 31; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 35; Èvola, *Versi d'oro*, 37. According to van der Horst, most early editors and commentators of the *Golden Verses* considered the *καταχθόνιοι δαίμονες* to be souls of the deceased, i.e., position c (*Vers d'or*, 6). In fact, Salmasius is the only one cited by van der Horst to do so; the other scholars prefer the more indefinite *genii*. Zeller identifies them with the *Di Manes*, the souls of the dead (*Philosophie der Griechen* 1.563 n. 4). Recently Detienne apparently also favors interpretation c (*'Daîmôn' dans le pythagorisme*, 49-50).

⁵³ Cf. Brenk, "In the Light of the Moon," 2082: "Two strands then clearly emerge, *daimones* as independent spirits, and as souls of the departed, and it is fair to say that the

δαίμων to describe a dead person became “almost a matter of course” in Hellenistic grave inscriptions,⁵⁴ and later, under Roman influence, it came to be used for *Di Manes*.⁵⁵

Hierocles’ commentary is very instructive at this point, if one ignores the somewhat fanciful embroidery.⁵⁶ According to him, the *daimones* are exceptional “human souls adorned with truth and virtue” (τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας ψυχὰς ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἀρετῇ κοσμηθείσας). The epithet distinguishes them from those *daimones* that are such by nature, “who make up the middle species” (οἱ τὸ μέσον γένος πληροῦσι), that is, the species of rational beings between god and man. In the *Golden Verses*, the middle species is represented by the heroes.⁵⁷ Hierocles apparently takes κατὰ incorrectly in the sense of ‘on, over, throughout,’ so that καταχθόνιος becomes equivalent to its opposite, ἐπιχθόνιος: καταχθονίους προσεῖπεν ὡς δυναμένους ἐπὶ γῆς πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ γήινα σώματα ὑπείσιέναι καὶ κατὰ γῆς οἰκεῖν.⁵⁸ These *daimones* should not be confused with an inferior species of spirits, “as the normal meaning of the word seems to indicate” (μὴ γὰρ φανόλον τι δαιμόνων γένος ὑπολάβωμεν εἰσηγεῖσθαι δεῖν τιμᾶν, ὡς ἂν τῷ δόξειεν ὑπὸ τῆς συνηθείας τὴν λέξιν ἐμφαίνειν), since it is inconceivable that man should honor a being lower in dignity than man himself.⁵⁹ Significantly, Hierocles does not even consider the

strands never become completely unravelled once they had become entangled.” Cf. also the *Lexicon in cod. Zabordae* on GV 3: δαίμονας· ἢ τὰς πολλὰς ψυχὰς τὰς εἰς τὸν ὑπόγειον τόπον πεμπομένας ἢ τοὺς ἐκεῖ ἐφεστῶτας αὐταῖς καθάρσεως ἔνεκα καὶ κολάσεως (“*daimones*: either the many souls sent to the place under the earth, or those appointed there over their [sc. the souls’] purification and punishment”).

⁵⁴ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 181.

⁵⁵ Cf. Lucian *Luct.* 24 (τοὺς τοῦ μακαρίτου δαίμονας), *Peregr.* 36 (δαίμονες πατρῷοι καὶ μητρῷοι); *IG* 14.938, 1683 (to name but two of many inscriptional references); cf. Marbach, “Manes,” *PW* 14.1 (1928) 1051–60, esp. 1060: “Auf griechischen Inschriften werden die M[anes] im allgemeinen Sinne gewöhnlich als θεοὶ καταχθόνιοι, im individuellen als δαίμονες bezeichnet.”

⁵⁶ Hierocles in *CA* 4. For a discussion of this passage in Hierocles, see Aujoulat, *Hiérocès d’Alexandrie*, 181–97, esp. 181–88.

⁵⁷ Cf. Hierocles in *CA* 3.6–7.

⁵⁸ “[Er] nennt sie ‘auf Erden befindliche,’ da sie ein Bürgerleben auf Erden führen, irdische Körper annehmen und sich auf Erden häuslich niederlassen können” (Hierocles in *CA* 4.1, trans. Köhler; emphasis added). Cf. also the discussion by van der Horst (*Vers d’or*, 6) and Aujoulat (*Hiérocès d’Alexandrie*, 182–87). κατὰ followed by the genitive as it is here can only mean ‘down into,’ or ‘under’; used in a composite form such as καταχθόνιος, it also denotes position or motion down or under; see LSJ, s.v. κατὰ A, E. On the other hand, καταχθόνιος does sometimes mean ‘on the ground’ or ‘earthbound’ in patristic texts; see *LPGL*, s.v.

⁵⁹ Hierocles in *CA* 4.3.

first of our options.

It is not possible to exclude any one of the three interpretations; nevertheless, I prefer the interpretation 'souls of the dead' for the following reasons: (a) It fits very well into a descending hierarchy that would consist of immortal gods, heroes, souls of the dead, parents, and close relatives; 'gods of the underworld' would fit less well. (b) The term *δαίμονες* is used fairly consistently by Pythagoreans to indicate beings located between the divine and the human spheres, which could include souls of the dead; it is never used with the meaning 'gods.' (c) This interpretation is consistent with my dating of the *Golden Verses* in the Hellenistic period, when it became very common to designate souls of the dead *daimones*. (d) It is supported by Hierocles' interpretation, who also considers *daimones* human souls in this context, albeit living as well as dead.

As Hierocles rightly noted, these *daimones* cannot be the same as those mentioned in other hierarchical lists, in which *daimones* always precede *heroes*, both categories together constituting the middle species.⁶⁰ Van der Horst's objection that the notion of dead souls being under the earth contradicts GV 70-71 (i.e., that man becomes an immortal god in the ethereal region after death)⁶¹ does not take into account the fact that ideas about the afterlife are notoriously inconsistent;⁶² furthermore, the epithet *καταχθόνιος* might have become transposed to indicate a state (i.e., after death) instead of a locality, just as Hades had been translocated to the Milky Way.⁶³

If my interpretation of *δαίμονες* is correct, namely, that they are spirits of the deceased, they constitute a level closer still to the worshiper. If the heroes are extraordinary human or semidivine beings related to the worshiper by some territorial or traditional bond, the souls of the dead are his immediate family;⁶⁴ as their de-

⁶⁰ See the references in n. 9 above; cf. also the observations in Cobet, *Collectanea critica*, 463-64; Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 224.

⁶¹ Van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 5.

⁶² Nock refers to "the widespread tendency of language about the afterlife to admit inconsistencies" (*Essays* 1.507 n. 19); Burkert speaks of "a veritable maze of conflicting tendencies" in Pythagorean traditions concerning the afterlife (*Lore and Science*, 134-35).

⁶³ See Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 357-68; also Franz Cumont, *After Life in Roman Paganism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), *passim*.

⁶⁴ Cf. Hild, "Daemon," 16: "Les âmes des ancêtres sont considérées comme des démons souterrains: *δαίμονες καταχθόνιοι, οἱ κατοικίδιοι θεοί*."

scendant it is his duty, and his alone, to perform the 'customary rites' (ἔννομα) in honor of the dead.⁶⁵ These rites did not differ much from that offered to the heroes and the gods of the underworld;⁶⁶ it is in fact more than probable that ἔννομα ῥέζων here refers to the cult of heroes as well.

As Burkert has emphasized, the *akousmata* contain many allusions to a cult of the dead;⁶⁷ according to Iamblichus, Pythagoras taught among other things "worship of the gods and piety toward the deceased" (θρησκεία θεῶν καὶ ὁσιότης πρὸς κατοικομένους).⁶⁸ Pythagoreans were also known for their distinctive form of burial (in white linen and upon leaves, without cremation).⁶⁹

4 The juxtaposition of gods and parents as beings worthy of honor and worship is common in ancient literature, especially gnomic literature.⁷⁰ The injunction to honor parents next to the gods is in fact considered one of the ἄγραφοι νόμοι, that is, a law

⁶⁵ See Rohde, *Psyche* 1.216–58, esp. 234. ἔννομα or the synonymous term νόμιμα is frequently used to refer to the rites offered to the dead; cf., e.g., Aeschylus *Cho.* 483–85. For the cult of the dead as a part of traditional piety, cf. [Aristotle] *De virt. et vit.* 1250b; Demosthenes 43.66–67; see Rohde, *Psyche* 1.259; Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 2, chap. 3; also Friedrich Pfister, "Ahnenkult," *RAC* 1 (1950) 190–92.

⁶⁶ Cf. Rohde, *Psyche* 1.240: "Der Cult, den die Familien den Seelen ihrer Vorfahren widmet, unterscheidet sich von der Verehrung der unterirdischer Götter und der Heroen kaum durch etwas Anderes als die viel engere Begrenzung der Cultgemeinde." For a more nuanced discussion, see Paul Stengel, "Chthonischer und Totenkult," in *Festschrift zum fünfzigjährigen Doctorjubiläum Ludwig Friedlaender* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1895) 414–32.

⁶⁷ Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 185–86; see n. 36 above.

⁶⁸ Iamblichus *VP* 32; cf. also Charondas *Proem.*, p. 62.8–11 Thesleff: one should not honor the deceased with tears and lamentations, but by remembering them and by annual offerings, since excessive grief is ingratitude toward the δαίμονας χθονίους; also the Letter of Theano to Rhodope, *Ep. Pyth.* 11, p. 184.9–10 Städele: Theano loves the soul of a certain philosopher "since he reveres the spirits of the dead" (ὡς φοβούμενον τοὺς καταχθονίους θεούς)—"Gemeint sind die Totengeister" (Alfons Städele, *Briefe des Pythagoras und der Pythagoreer* [Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 115; Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1980] 349). This letter is probably very late; Städele dates it in the 5th century AD (*ibid.*, 351).

⁶⁹ See Herodotus 2.81; Iamblichus *VP* 154–55; Pliny *HN* 35.160; cf. on this also Boehm, "De symbolis Pythagoreis," 30–32.

⁷⁰ See Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 2.141–49; Joseph William Hewitt, "Gratitude to Parents in Greek and Roman Literature," *AJPh* 52 (1931) 30–48; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Sather Classical Lectures 25; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951) 60 n. 101; Wefelmeier, *Sentenzensammlung der Demonicea*, 78–81; van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 116; Küchler, *Weisheitstraditionen*, 217, 272. For Jewish literature, see the references cited by Klaus Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu: Ihr historischer Hintergrund im Judentum und im Alten Testament 1: Markus und Parallelen* (WMANT 40; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972) 278–90; cf. also Dieterich, *Nekyia*, 165–68. A valuable collection of excerpts on Greek attitudes toward parents is to be found in Stobaeus 4.25.

that was upheld everywhere and by everybody.⁷¹ Sometimes gods and parents are the only beings mentioned; at other times, they form part of a hierarchy of *veneranda*, as is the case here.⁷² The latter seems to be the norm in sources on Pythagoreanism.⁷³

As we have noted above, the rationale ascribed to Pythagoras for honoring parents is *πρεσβύτερον τιμώτερον*.⁷⁴ We also find another rationale in the philosophical tradition, namely, that parents are like gods in as much as they procreate and care for their children; they therefore require similar honor.⁷⁵ This relationship between parents and gods may be alluded to in the

⁷¹ See Xenophon *Mem.* 4.4.19-20; Thalheim, "Ἀγραφοὶ νόμοι," 889-90; Hirzel, ΑΓΡΑΦΟΕ ΝΟΜΟΕ; Küchler, *Weisheitstraditionen*, 244-45; Fiedler, "Haustafel," 1065-66. For duties toward parents in general, see Adolf Lumpe and Heinrich Karpp, "Eltern," *RAC* 4 (1959) 1190-1219.

⁷² Gods and parents only: cf. the command of Triptolemus at Eleusis ap. Porphyry *Abst.* 4.22; Thales ap. Diogenes Laertius 1.60; Cleobulus in *Anecdota Graeca* 1 (ed. J. F. Boissonade, Paris, 1829; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1962) 135; Pindar *Pyth.* 6.23-27 with *scholia*; Xenophon *Mem.* 4.4.19-20; Menander *Sent.* 322; Chares frg. 1.7; Pseudo-Phocylides 8; Philo *Dec.* 51; *Oracula Sibyllina* 3.593-94. (In Sextus the wise man has taken over the position of the parents; see *Sent.* 244, 319; cf. also 176, 190, 229, 292.) Hierarchy: Euripides frg. 853.2 Nauck (gods, parents, laws); Plato *Leg.* 4.717ab (Olympian gods, civic gods, gods of underworld, *daimones*, heroes, ancestral deities, parents); [Aristotle] *De virt. et vit.* 1250b (gods, *daimones*, country, parents, deceased); [Isocrates] *Demonic.* 13-14 (gods, *δαμόνιον*, parents), 16 (gods, parents, friends, laws); Diogenes Laertius 7.120 (gods, parents, brothers); Polybius 6.4.5 (gods, parents, elders, laws); Plutarch *De liber. educ.* 7.7e (gods, parents, elders, laws, rulers); Cicero *Off.* 1.160 (gods, country, parents); *Disticha Catonis*, *sententiae* 1-3 (God, parents, kinsmen); Exod 20:2-12 (God, sabbath, parents); Sir 7:27-29 (parents, the Lord, priests); Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.27 §206 (God, parents, elders); Gregory of Nazianzus *Carmina moralia* 32.15-16 = PG 917.6-7 (God, parents, priests, elders). Both these lists can easily be extended.

⁷³ See Aristoxenus frgs. 33, 34 Wehrli (deity, *δαμόνιον*, parents, laws); Diogenes Laertius 8.23 (gods, *daimones*, heroes, parents); Zaleucus *Prooem.*, p. 227.23-25 Thesleff (gods, *daimones*, heroes, parents, laws, rulers); [Archytas] *De leg.*, p. 34.28-29 Thesleff (gods, *daimones*, parents); Porphyry *VP* 38 = Iamblichus *VP* 100 (the divine, daemonic, and heroic genera; parents, benefactors, and laws). An exception is Perictione *De mul. harm.*, p. 144.5-8 Thesleff (gods, parents).

⁷⁴ Iamblichus *VP* 37; cf. also Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.27 §206. See in general on honoring parents in the Pythagorean tradition also Iamblichus *VP* 38, 39, 71, 175, 246; and in Hellenistic Pythagorean texts (all in Thesleff, *Pythagorean Texts*), Perictione *De mul. harm.*, p. 145.8-18, 145.23-26; Pempelus *De parent.*, pp. 141.14-19, 142.4-6, 11-13; Zaleucus *Prooem.*, p. 227.23-25; Charondas *Prooem.*, pp. 61.1-3, 61.36-62.2—all these texts cited and discussed by David L. Balch, "Neopythagorean Moralists and the New Testament Household Codes," *ANRW* II.26.1 (1992) 380-411.

⁷⁵ See esp. Hierocles Πῶς χρηστὸν τοῖς γονεῦσιν ap. Stobaeus 4.25.53; cf. also Plato *Leg.* 11.931a; Philo *Dec.* 51, 120; Perictione *De mul. harm.*, p. 144.5-8 Thesleff; Gottlob Schrenk, "πάτηρ," *TDNT* 5.950; Lumpe and Karpp, "Eltern," 1193, 1202-3; Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung*, 285-86.

Golden Verses by means of the chiasm *τίμα-σέβου-σέβε-τίμα*; by using the verb *τίμα* for both gods and parents, the latter are assimilated to the former.⁷⁶

Next to honoring parents comes honoring closest relations. The phrase *τοὺς ἄγχιστ' ἐγγεγαῶτας* literally means 'the closest born,'⁷⁷ or, if we accept the alternative reading *ἐκγεγαῶτας* (M), we have 'the closest offspring.' The question is, however, closest to whom? It could either be 'closest to you,' or 'closest to your parents.' The variation between *σοὺς* and *τούς* in *GV* 4 probably indicates the latter, that is, "your parents and their closest relatives/offspring."⁷⁸ The word *ἄγχιστ(α)* refers to the category of *ἀγχιστεία*, which comprised one's immediate family up to and including cousins, and which had special rights concerning inheritance and duties concerning blood revenge and the cult of the dead.⁷⁹ Hierocles the Stoic speaks of two circles of family relationships that should both be characterized by an attitude of respect: the first comprises parents, brothers, wife, and children; the second, uncles and aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers, and cousins.⁸⁰ The *ἀγχιστεία* consists in these two circles together.⁸¹

The injunction to honor relatives is not common in the Pythagorean tradition; we find benefactors after parents, instead.⁸² This seems to indicate that the author of the *Golden Verses* is more family-orientated than the Pythagorean tradition in general;⁸³ on the other hand, we find no reference to marriage in the *Golden Verses*, a topic which does feature prominently in other texts on

⁷⁶ The difference between *τιμάω* and *σέβω/σέβομαι* is purely stylistic; both are used elsewhere for honoring the parents. See Hewitt, "Gratitude to Parents," 34 n. 21.

⁷⁷ Cf. Hesychius, s.v. *ἐγγεγαῶτα*: *γεγεννημένα*.

⁷⁸ Cf. Hierocles in *CA* 5.1: *οἱ ἐγγύτατα γονέων ὄντες*.

⁷⁹ See *Suda*, s.v. *ἀγχιστεύς* (= Photius *Lexicon*, s.v.): *ἀγχιστεῖς, οἱ ἀπὸ ἀδελφῶν καὶ ἀνεψιῶν καὶ θεῶν κατὰ πατέρα καὶ μητέρα ἐγγυτάτω τοῦ τελευτήσαντος. οἱ δὲ ἔξω τούτων, συγγενεῖς μόνον*. Cf. also T. Thalheim, "Ἀγχιστεία," *PW* 1 (1894) 2110; Rohde, *Psyche* 1.221 n. 1, 260 n. 2, 263–64, 2.340 n. 4; Jean Gaudemet, "Familie I (Familienrecht)," *RAC* 7 (1969) 312.

⁸⁰ Hierocles *Πῶς συγγενεῖσι χρηστέον* ap. Stobaeus 4.27.23.

⁸¹ See in general on the family also Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 2.157–62.

⁸² Cf. Porphyry *VP* 38; Iamblichus *VP* 100, 230. Van der Horst finds this difference "astonishing" (*Vers d'or*, 7).

⁸³ Contrast Iamblichus *VP* 257: "Their relatives [*οἱ συγγενεῖς*] were especially indignant because the Pythagoreans gave the right hand as a pledge of good faith only to Pythagoreans, and to no other relatives [*τῶν οἰκείων*] except parents; also because they offered their possessions in common to one another, but excluded their relatives" (trans. Dillon and Hershbell, *Pythagoras*). Cf. also *VP* 255.

Pythagoreanism.⁸⁴ This may perhaps be explained by the fact that the poem is in the first place aimed at young people not yet married (see chap. 7 above). Elsewhere, the notion of honoring relatives is mainly found in Stoic texts.⁸⁵

1.2 Horizontal Relationships (GV 5–8)

Having given precepts for one's hierarchical relationships, the author of the *Golden Verses* turns to horizontal relationships, which should be characterized by friendship.

GV 5–8

τῶν δ' ἄλλων ἀρετῇ ποιεῦ φίλον ὅστις ἄριστος.
πραέσι δ' εἶκε λόγους ἔργοισι τ' ἐπωφελίμοισι,
μηδ' ἔχθαιρε φίλον σὸν ἀμαρτάδος εἵνεκα μικρῆς,
ὄφρα δύνη· δύναμις γὰρ ἀνάγκης ἐγγύθι ναίει.

Among others, choose as your friend him who excels in virtue.
Yield to his gentle words and useful actions,
and do not hate your friend for a small fault,
for as long as you are able to do so. For ability lives near necessity.

The author now turns from relationships given and determined by our birth and the human condition to voluntary relationships.⁸⁶ The only such relationship mentioned here, is that of friendship. This is not a fortuitous choice. As we have seen, the topos of friendship often follows upon that of piety in lists of duties.⁸⁷ This is due to the fact that friendship is a very typically Greek form of interhuman relationship; it is as characteristic of Greek social behavior as neighborliness and brotherly love is of Christian atti-

⁸⁴ See Burkert, *Lore and Science*, General Index, s.v. 'Marriage, Pythagorean attitude to.'

⁸⁵ Cf. Diogenes Laertius 7.120 = SVF 3.731: δοκεῖ δ' ἀντοῖς καὶ γονέας σέβεσθαι καὶ ἀδελφοὺς ἐν δευτέρῃ μοίρᾳ μετὰ τοὺς θεοὺς ('They approved of honouring parents and brothers in the second place next after the gods'; trans. R. D. Hicks, LCL); Hierocles ap. Stobaeus 4.25.53, p. 644.5–9; Crouch, *Colossian Haustafel*, chaps. 3–4, passim; Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung*, 287.

⁸⁶ Thus already van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 7–8.

⁸⁷ Cf., e.g., [Isocrates] *Demonic*. 16; Plutarch *De liber. educ.* 7.7e. For the combination of εὐσέβεια and φιλανθρωπία see Dihle, *Kanon der zwei Tugenden*, passim. For the topos of friendship in general, see Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 2, chap. 8; Kurt Treu, "Freundschaft," *RAC* 8 (1972) 418–34; Jean-Claude Fraisse, *Philia: La notion d'amitié dans la philosophie antique* (Paris: Vrin, 1974); L. Michael White, "Morality between Two Worlds: A Paradigm of Friendship in Philippians," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 201–15, esp. 211–12.

tudes.⁸⁸ Pythagoreans were indeed famous for their friendships and for their doctrines on friendship,⁸⁹ although it played an important role in other philosophical traditions as well.⁹⁰ Precepts concerning friendship abound in gnostic literature.

The topos of friendship in antiquity is summarized very well by Treu: "Gemeinsam ist die hohe Schätzung der F[reundschaft] überhaupt, die Forderung nach Gleichheit, Offenheit, Gegenseitigkeit, Vorsicht bei der Wahl, Treue, Hinwegsehen über kleine Fehler, Mahnung bei ernsthaften."⁹¹ In the *Golden Verses* only some of these aspects are mentioned, namely, the choice of friends (GV 5), and one's attitude towards a friend's positive (GV 6) and negative actions (GV 7–8); the latter implies the motifs of loyalty and the duration of friendship.

5 The author of the *Golden Verses* emphasizes the contrast between one's relationship with parents and relatives, on the one hand (GV 4), and other people, on the other hand, by means of a well-constructed sentence. τῶν ἄλλων in the strong initial position is balanced by ὅστις ἄριστος in the final position; ποιεῖν in the middle are flanked by ἀρετῇ and φίλον. The effect is to highlight the imperative, while the other elements of the sentence are paired off and thus correlated. One's parents and relatives are given, but in the case of other relationships one has a very definite choice, and this choice should be exercised in a deliberate and responsible manner. Only the most excellent persons should be chosen, more specifically, only those who excel in virtue.⁹²

⁸⁸ Cf. Treu, "Freundschaft," 418–19, 425–26; White, "Morality between Two Worlds," 211–12.

⁸⁹ See Treu, "Freundschaft," 420; Fraisse, *Philia*, 57–67; Johan C. Thom, "'Harmonious Equality': The Topos of Friendship in Neopythagorean Writings," in *Friendship in the Ancient World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald; Atlanta: Scholars Press [forthcoming]). For legendary Pythagorean friendships see Aristoxenus frg. 31 Wehrli (= Iamblichus VP 233–36); Cicero *Off.* 3.10.45; Diodorus 10.4; Porphyry VP 59–61; Iamblichus VP 237–39. For their doctrines on friendship, see Aristoxenus ap. Iamblichus VP 101–2, 230–33; Timaeus of Tauromenium frg. 13 Jacoby ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.10; Alexander Polyhistor ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.33; Diogenes Laertius 8.23; Porphyry VP 33; Iamblichus VP 40, 69, 229–33. According to Iamblichus VP 230 it was proverbial to call good friends Pythagoreans.

⁹⁰ Plato's dialogue *Lysis* is devoted to friendship (cf. also his *Phaedrus*). Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 8.1155a1–9.1172a15 contains the classical analysis. Theophrastus wrote three books on the subject, now all lost. Other treatments are to be found in Xenophon *Mem.* 2.4–10, Cicero *De amicitia*, Plutarch *De amicorum multitudine*, *Quomodo adulator ab amico inter noscatur*, and *De fraterno amore*. Epicureans were of course also known for their emphasis on friendships; cf., e.g., Philodemus *Περὶ παρρησίας*.

⁹¹ Treu, "Freundschaft," 423.

⁹² ἀρετῇ should be taken as a dative of respect with ἄριστος. Note also the *parechesis*

As Treu has noted, care in choosing one's friends is a common element in the topos of friendship.⁹³ What is striking, is the verb used here and elsewhere to denote this act: one does not simply *choose* a friend and expect the friendship to follow of itself; one *makes* someone one's friend, even if it means to pursue him.⁹⁴ The tactics involved in achieving this goal are indeed often discussed.⁹⁵

The sole criterion for choosing a friend is his excellence in ἀρετή, virtue. According to Aristotle, friendship is based either on what is good, what is pleasant, or what is useful (*Eth. Nic.* 8.2.1). This allows him to distinguish between three kinds of friendship (ibid., 8.3.1). True friendship is only possible between the good, between persons who resemble each other in virtue (ibid., 8.3.6; cf. also Cicero *Amic.* 5.18, 6.20), while friendships based on usefulness or pleasure are inferior. True friends of course also enjoy one another's company and are useful to one another (ibid., 8.4.1; cf. also Plutarch *De amic. mult.* 3.94b). In other texts we find warnings against choosing the bad, flatterers, the rich, fools, or those who always find fault, as friends.⁹⁶

6 Criticism has been leveled at (a) the apparent moral weakness of yielding to gentle words, and (b) the fact that yielding to useful deeds is nonsensical.⁹⁷ Van der Horst attempts to avoid this criticism by interpreting πραέσι εἶκε λόγοις as "que les paroles douces soient pour toi une habitude"; the student himself must make room in his life for gentle words and useful deeds.⁹⁸ However, εἵκειν usually means 'to yield to, to give way to, to give

ἀρετῇ ... ἀριστος; thus already Marcilius (1585).

⁹³ Cf. Solon ap. Stobaeus 3.1.172, p. 114.11-12 (= DK 10.3β9); Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 8.3.8-9; [Isocrates] *Demonic.* 24; Xenophon *Mem.* 2.6; Cicero *Amic.* 21.78-22.85; Menander *Sent. Pap.* 8.7; Plutarch *De amic. mult.* 94a-94f; Porphyry *VP* 13; Clitarchus 88, 141; *Gnom. hom.* 31. The Pythagorean *akousma* "Do not give the right hand to everyone" is interpreted to mean "Do not become friends with everyone"; cf. Plutarch *De liber. educ.* 12e; Plutarch *De amic. mult.* 96a; Diogenes Laertius 8.17; Iamblichus *Protr.* 21, pp. 108.2, 122.15-21.

⁹⁴ Cf. Plutarch *De amic. mult.* 4.94e.

⁹⁵ Cf. Plato *Lys.* 205e-210e; Xenophon *Mem.* 2.6.8-14 (πῶς χρὴ φίλον τοῦτον ποιῆσθαι).

⁹⁶ Cf. *Gnom. Vat.* 460; Antiphon frg. 65 DK; [Isocrates] *Demonic.* 30; Pseudo-Phocylides 91-94; Plutarch *De amic. mult.*; Menander *Sent.* 49, 634; *Men. et Phil. Comp.* 2.85-86, 90; Maximus Tyrius 18; *Gnom. Byz.* 160; Democritus frgs. 64, 109 DK.

⁹⁷ Cf. Cobet, *Collectanea critica*, 464; Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 210.

⁹⁸ Van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 8.

in to, or to retreat before, a superior force,' whether that be physical or moral.⁹⁹ Van der Horst's interpretation, with its implication of *yielding* to a morally good habit, is therefore forced.¹⁰⁰ The author of the "gentle words and useful deeds" thus has to be someone else than the addressee, namely, in this context, a friend, which brings us back to the criticism referred to above. We may answer the first point of criticism in the following manner: 'Gentle words' should not be confused with 'weak words' or 'flattery'; it rather refers to words of advice or admonition used by a well-meaning friend.¹⁰¹ Ancient authors often emphasized that such advice or criticism should be coached in 'gentle words.'¹⁰² "Yield to gentle words" thus means "Pay heed to, do not become angry at, your friend's advice." The problem underlying this command is that the one rebuked often retaliates by slandering the person who admonishes him; the ability to accept advice and criticism is a virtue in itself.¹⁰³

If this is the meaning of the first half of *GV* 6, 'useful actions' in the second half can only refer to a friend's guidance. "Gentle words and useful actions" is used as a unit to describe a benevolent friend's actions.¹⁰⁴ The sentence as a whole therefore prescribes an openness, a willingness to benefit from a friend's benevolent criticism and guidance; it also indicates *the kind of friend* by whom one should allow oneself to be influenced.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ LSJ, s.v. εἴλω.

¹⁰⁰ None of the examples cited by van der Horst is pertinent, since they all refer to a morally *bad* habit or emotion; cf. also Aimé Puech's review of van der Horst, *JS* (1933) 270–71.

¹⁰¹ So also Hierocles in *CA* 7.1; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 36.

¹⁰² Cf. Plato *Leg.* 10.888a: ἐν πραέσι λόγοις ... νοουθετῶν; Cicero *Amic.* 24.88–25.91; Horace *Ep.* 1.18.44–45: "Tu cede potentis amici lenibus imperiis"; Iamblichus *VP* 101; also *Vit. Aesop.* (W) 109, p. 101.34 Perry. Cf. also Gal 6:1, with the commentary by Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 295–98; Abraham J. Malherbe, "'Gentle as a Nurse': The Cynic Background to 1 Thessalonians 2," *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 35–48, esp. 41–42 (with references to ancient authors); idem, "'Pastoral Care,'" 376–85.

¹⁰³ Discussed by Philodemus *Περὶ παρρησίας* frg. 13; cf. also frgs. 26, 36, 38, 40; Plutarch *Quomodo adulator* 67b and passim. Cf. further the references on accepting advice in Malherbe, "'Pastoral care,'" 384–85. Iamblichus *VP* 101 underlines the necessity of yielding and controlling anger (εἴκειν καὶ κρατεῖν ὀργῆς) in friendship, particularly in the case of a younger friend in his relation to an older one.

¹⁰⁴ According to Iamblichus *VP* 101 only *gentle admonitions* will be useful.

¹⁰⁵ According to Iamblichus *VP* 101 this would be friends superior to oneself: fathers, elders, and benefactors. In this context the latter would include teachers. Cf. also *Pyth. Sent.* 33: the best friend is he who helps one to advance in wisdom; Democritus frg. 47 DK: one

That one should derive benefit from friendship is a commonplace in ancient thought.¹⁰⁶ In fact, as Dihle points out, although the strict individualism of Greco-Roman ethics seems to relent as far as friendship is concerned, this is not the case: even in friendship the emphasis is on mutual support for personal moral progress; the ultimate value of friendship lies in the personal benefit derived from it which enables one to advance on the road to virtue.¹⁰⁷ Yielding to a friend, as understood here, is therefore very different from the Christian notion of self-denial which entails “das Moment der Hingabe, des Verzichts auf den eigenen Wert oder Anspruch,”¹⁰⁸ since the motivation for the former remains self-interest.

7-8 Having laid down a rule for the correct attitude toward a friend's beneficial actions, the author turns to the negative side of the coin, namely, a friend's faults and mistakes: one should not hate a friend, that is, become his enemy, for a minor mistake. This injunction should be seen against the background of the old ethical ideal, to be able to benefit your friends and harm your enemies,¹⁰⁹ which rather simplistically divides humanity into two classes, friends and enemies. Our author asks for a greater tolerance, instead, which undercuts this strict distinction. In this regard we may also compare Pythagoras' demand that our conduct be such “as not to make friends into enemies, but to turn enemies into friends.”¹¹⁰ Tolerance, as an essential aspect of friendship, is indeed also stressed by other authors.¹¹¹ The only justifiable reason for breaking off a friendship, is a great transgression or

should yield to the law, rulers, and to someone wiser. Philodemus *Περὶ παρηγορίας* as a whole deals with criticism and guidance.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Xenophon *Mem.* 2.9-10; Cicero *Amic.* 14.51; Plutarch *De amic. mult.* 3.94b; *Gnom. hom.* 31: καὶ ἱατρὸν καὶ φίλον, οὐ τὸν ἡδίω ἀλλὰ τὸν ὠφελιμώτερον ἐκλέγεσθαι δεῖ (“In the case of both doctor and friend one should select not the most pleasant, but the most useful”).

¹⁰⁷ Albrecht Dihle, “Ethik,” *RAC* 6 (1966) 658-59.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 658.

¹⁰⁹ See Dihle, *Goldene Regel*, 32-33.

¹¹⁰ Diogenes Laertius 8.23; cf. also Iamblichus *VP* 40; Zaleucus *Prooem.*, p. 226.18-21 Thesleff.

¹¹¹ Cf. Pittacus ap. Stobaeus 3.1.172, p. 120.6-7 (= DK 10.3ε7); Solon ap. *ibid.*, p. 114.11-12 (= DK 10.3β9); Theognis 323-24; Democritus frgs. 109, 302 DK; Plato *Phdr.* 233c; Sextus *Sent.* 292; Iamblichus *VP* 101-2, 230-32. For a somewhat different approach to the same problem, cf. Matt 5:21-26; *Did.* 1.3-5.

unrectifiable fault; we should therefore endure a friend's mistakes *as long as we can* (GV 8a), in order that the friendship itself may endure.¹¹²

The meaning of the γνώμη "Ability lives near necessity" (GV 8b), which concludes this section, is obscure. The closest parallel is Chaeremon fragment 18 Nauck: χρεία δ' ἀνάγκης οὐκ ἀπώκισται πολὺ, "Need does not dwell far from necessity," which seems to say the exact opposite.¹¹³ We therefore have to determine its meaning from its present context only. Does it mean (a) "Since you can, you must";¹¹⁴ (b) "You can, because you must";¹¹⁵ or (c) "Do it while you can, because soon you may be forced to do it"?¹¹⁶ Interpretation *b* seems unlikely, since the premise (as stated in GV 8a) is *that you can*; it hardly needs to be deduced again. The last interpretation, on the other hand, is too artificial to be considered seriously without supporting evidence. We are left with the first, which, albeit not certain, fits the context fairly well.¹¹⁷ It supports the command in the previous sentence by deducing a moral imperative ("You must not hate your friend") from the indicative ("You are able not to hate your friend").¹¹⁸

According to Aristoxenus, Pythagoras emphasized the need for acting according to what circumstances require (the notion of the *kairos*), particularly in one's personal relationships.¹¹⁹ Such a

¹¹² Cf. esp. Plato *Phdr.* 233c: "... not taking up violent enmity because of small matters, but slowly gathering little anger when the transgressions are great, forgiving involuntary wrongs and trying to prevent intentional ones; for these are the proofs of a friendship that will endure for a long time" (trans. H. N. Fowler, LCL). Cf. also Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 9.3.3-5; Plutarch *De frat. amor.*, passim; Iamblichus *VP* 232. Very similar is Matt 18:21-23. For the emphasis on the endurance of friendship in Pythagoreanism, see Fraisse, *Philia*, 64-65.

¹¹³ Cited by Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 211.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Iamblichus Arab. f. 304^r.4-5: "Denn Du selbst kannst damit die Situation schaffen, daß (das Bleiben beim Freund) beinahe so etwas wie eine notwendige Sache für Dich wird" (trans. Daiber).

¹¹⁵ Cf. Hierocles in *CA* 7.6-7; Cobet, *Collectanea critica*, 464.

¹¹⁶ So Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 211; van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 9.

¹¹⁷ So also Schröder, "Nobelee geest," 87: "De moog'lijkheid leidt tot de noodzaak."

¹¹⁸ According to Plutarch frg. 86 Sandbach, it is not only a matter of morality, but also of expediency: "Indeed, the advice of the Pythagoreans would not merely prevent us from being the first to wrong a friend, but also encourages us to bear patiently the friend's faults, so long as we can. And the precept is not only one of morality; it contains good sense in the bargain, for we are likely to have entrusted some of our interests to a friend, and we should not act towards him in any way that would make a breach in the relationship" (trans. Sandbach, LCL).

¹¹⁹ Ap. Iamblichus *VP* 180-83 = DK 58D5. See on this passage also de Vogel, *Pythagoras*, 116-22.

standard of appropriateness demands the faculty of judgment and discernment (cf. *GV* 68–69), which is implied here: the student ought to learn under what circumstances he should forgive his friend's faults, and when the friendship can no longer be saved.¹²⁰

2 *Practicing Virtue (GV 9–49a)*

The next major, and indeed the longest section of the *Golden Verses (GV 9–49a)* deals with the virtues that have to be practiced in order to obtain the benefits promised in the last section. The section as a whole is demarcated by means of an *inclusio* (κρατεῖν δ' εἰθίξεο τῶνδε, *GV* 9b; τούτων δὲ κρατήσας, *GV* 49b), but it contains various quite substantial subsections, namely, *GV* 9–20, 21–26, 27–44, and 45–49a.

2.1 *The Cardinal Virtues (GV 9–20)*

The first subsection (*GV* 9–20) may perhaps be seen as an introduction to *GV* 9–49a as a whole. It is clear that it deals with various virtues in summary fashion,¹²¹ although only one of them, δικαιοσύνη (justice), is mentioned explicitly (*GV* 13). The virtue treated in the first few verses (*GV* 9b–12) appears to be *self-restraint* (σωφροσύνη), that in the next verse *justice*, while *GV* 14–16 enjoin us to act with *insight* (φρόνησις) in view of the uncertainty of the human condition. Finally, the last few verses (*GV* 17–20) have to do with endurance or *courage* (ἀνδρεία) in the face of troubles.¹²²

Self-restraint, justice, moral insight, and courage became known in late antiquity as the four cardinal virtues and as such they exerted a strong influence right into the Renaissance.¹²³

¹²⁰ See Fraisse, *Philia*, 64–65.

¹²¹ Cf. Stobaeus 3.1.11, where *GV* 9b–16 is quoted under the heading *περὶ ἀρετῆς*.

¹²² Hierocles explicitly uses the terms *σωφροσύνη*, *δικαιοσύνη*, *φρόνησις*, and *ἀνδρεία* in his discussion of this section; cf., e.g., in *CA* 10.1.

¹²³ One of the first authors to use the term 'cardinal virtues' is Jerome; see Helen North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 35; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966) 358. North's work is one of the most recent comprehensive discussions of the cardinal virtues (see her Subject Index, s.v. 'Canon of cardinal virtues'), although, as the title indicates, it focuses on one in particular. See further Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 1.304; Eduard Schwartz, *Ethik der Griechen* (ed. Will Richter; Stuttgart: Koehler, 1951) 52–58; and especially Dihle, *Kanon der zwei Tugenden*.

Although a tentative and shifting alignment of four or five primary virtues had been known at least as early as Pindar and Aeschylus, it was Plato who defined the canon for all time.... Rejected by Aristotle, the canon was adopted by the Stoics, although it did not correspond to their theory of the soul, and thereafter it found its way to Rome, to the Church Fathers, and ultimately to the literature and art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.¹²⁴

Plato's canon, as established in the *Republic*, Book 4, consists of the virtues wisdom, courage, self-restraint or soberness, and justice (σοφία, ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη).¹²⁵ σοφία ('contemplative wisdom') is later usually replaced by φρόνησις ('practical wisdom'); the latter became the most important virtue in the Stoic canon (cf. *SVF* 1.200–1). Despite the dominance of Plato's canon, other virtues were not excluded from consideration. Two other such virtues worthy of mention are piety and friendship, since they were dealt with in the preceding section. Both Iamblichus and Hierocles of Alexandria considered these two virtues as the first and last virtue, respectively.¹²⁶ However, the use of a transitional sentence in *GV* 9, as well as the *inclusio* formed by *GV* 9b and 49b, clearly separates the section on piety and friendship from that on the cardinal virtues.

The sequence in which the different virtues are treated does not seem to have any significance, and at first glance there is no apparent connection between the verses dealing with each virtue, apart from their thematic relatedness. At closer inspection, however, a logic or development does reveal itself at a topical level. The links will be more readily discernible after a more detailed commentary, and will therefore be left aside for the moment.

GV 9–12

τὰυτα μὲν οὕτως ἴσθι, κρατεῖν δ' εἰθίζεο τῶνδε·
 γαστροῦς μὲν πρῶτιστα καὶ ὕπνου λαγνείης τε
 καὶ θυμοῦ. πρήξης δ' αἰσχροῖν ποτε μήτε μετ' ἄλλου
 μήτ' ἰδίη· πάντων δὲ μάλιστ' αἰσχύνηο σαυτόν.

¹²⁴ North, *Sophrosyne*, 151.

¹²⁵ See esp. *Resp.* 4.427e–435b.

¹²⁶ Cf. Hierocles in *CA* 7.9. Iamblichus *VP* 134–240 discusses the virtues in the following sequence: piety (134–56), wisdom (157–66), justice (167–86), σωφροσύνη (187–213), courage (214–28), and friendship (229–40). On the relation between piety and the other virtues see Dirk Loenen, *Eusebeia en de cardinale deugden: Een studie over de functie van eusebeia in het leven der Grieken en haar verhouding tot de ethiek* (Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, n.s. 23/4; Amsterdam, 1960); Dihle, *Kanon der zwei Tugenden*.

Know the above then, and accustom yourself to be master of the following:

first of all, of your stomach, of sleep, of lust,
and of anger. Never do anything shameful, neither with somebody else,
nor on your own. Feel shame before yourself most of all.

As stated above, these four verses deal with the virtue of *σωφροσύνη*. GV 9 functions as a link between this and the previous section, containing both a summary command referring to the preceding precepts (*ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως ἴσθι*), and an introductory precept (*κρατεῖν δὲ εἰθίξω τῶνδε*) which refers not only to the immediately following verses, but also to the present section as a whole. The virtue of *σωφροσύνη* is treated under two aspects, namely, continence or self-control (*ἐγκράτεια*; GV 9b–11a), and shame (*αἰδώς*; GV 11b–12).¹²⁷

9 The first half of GV 9 is taken over from Theognis 31: *ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως ἴσθι· κακοῖσι δὲ μὴ προσομίλει*. This probably implies that the author of the *Golden Verses* considers his work to belong to the same genre as that of Theognis. The two imperatives used in this verse refer to two basic principles of Greek ethics, namely, that knowledge is the key to a virtuous life, and that character is formed by accustoming oneself to the correct moral conduct by means of practice.¹²⁸ The importance of knowledge is also emphasized or implied in GV 30, 37, 50–57, 62, and 64. The verb *εἰθίξειν* recurs in GV 14 and 35 and is implied in GV 45.¹²⁹ Custom as

¹²⁷ For *ἐγκράτεια* and *αἰδώς* as virtues subordinate to *σωφροσύνη*, cf. the Stoic classification of *ἐγκράτεια* and *αἰδημοσύνη* (defined as an attitude that takes care to avoid rightful blame) as belonging to the supercategory of *σωφροσύνη* (SVF 3.416). See further the discussion below.

¹²⁸ See Hadot, “Spiritual Guide,” 452: “What is desired is not knowledge, but rather knowledge as *habitus*, the transformation of the individual through knowledge.... First of all, the elements of knowledge must be appropriated, which is a purely intellectual process. Then, knowledge must be impressed upon the mind in such a way that it is always at hand and that it cannot be limited or lost on account of any external circumstances—in other words, in such a way that it becomes one with the individual and a constituent part of the person’s being. This second stage can be attained only through practice and habituation with the incorporation of one’s emotional components.” For the subject in general, see Frank Hieronymus, “MEATH: Übung, Lernen und angrenzende Begriffe” (Diss. Basel, 1970). Cf. also Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity* (Sather Classical Lectures 48; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), chaps. 2 and 3, passim. Plato spoke of virtues created by “habit and practice” (*ἔθελαι καὶ ἀσκήσασθαι*) (*Resp.* 7.518e).

¹²⁹ The lengthened form, a *hapax legomenon*, is probably poetic; cf. van der Horst, *Vers d’or*, 10; LSJ, s.v. *εἰθίξω*. This verb is often used in gnomic and paraenetic material; cf. [Isocrates] *Demonic*. 15; Sextus *Sent.*, passim; Plutarch *De liber. educ.* 2a, 10f, 11c.

a principle of moral conduct is also underlined in a well-known Pythagorean precept: *ἔλου βίον τὸν ἄριστον, ἥδὺν δὲ αὐτὸν ἢ συν-ῆθεια ποιήσει* ("Choose the best way of life, and habit will make it pleasant").¹³⁰

κρατεῖν has a double application: It refers in the first place to *all* the precepts that are to follow, up to *GV* 49 that is, where *κρατήσας* refers to the preceding precepts. Mastering of precepts is a fundamental step in the psychagogic process and is therefore emphasized again and again (cf. also *GV* 45 and 65).¹³¹ Secondly, the verb is connected with the objects in the next verse and thus denotes the virtue of *ἐγκράτεια*.

10–11 *ἐγκράτεια*, whether by itself or as part of the wider concept of *σωφροσύνη*, became to an increasing degree the hallmark of the Hellenistic philosopher.¹³² It was considered by many the most characteristic virtue of the Christian life, which indeed led to an overemphasis of the importance of asceticism among early Christians, but also among many of their contemporaries.¹³³ According to Xenophon, Socrates called *ἐγκράτεια* "the foundation of all virtue"; both he and Aristotle devote lengthy discussions to this virtue.¹³⁴

Pythagoreans of all periods emphasized the need for self-control.¹³⁵ The formulation here, however, does not differ from

¹³⁰ Ap. Plutarch *Mor.* 602c; cf. also 123c, 466f; Galen *Affect. dignot.* 6.16; Stobaeus 3.1.29, 3.29.99; *Gnom. Var.* 461.

¹³¹ See Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 112–30; Hadot, *Tradition der Seelenleitung*, 58–60.

¹³² See on this virtue Schwartz, *Ethik der Griechen*, 54–56; Walter Grundmann, "*ἐγκράτεια*," *TDNT* 2.339–42; Ulrich Luck, "*σώφρων* κτλ.," *TDNT* 7.1097–1104; Henry Chadwick, "Enkrateia," *RAC* 5 (1962) 343–65; North, *Sophrosyne*, Subject Index, s.v. 'Enkrateia'; van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 165–66.

¹³³ For the development of enkratism in late antiquity, see the various articles in Ugo Bianchi, ed., *La tradizione dell' enkrateia: Motivazione ontologiche e protologiche* (Atti del Colloquio Internazionale, Milano, 20–23 aprile 1982; Rome: Ateneo, 1985).

¹³⁴ Xenophon *Mem.* 1.5.4, 2.1.1–7, 4.5.1–11; Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 7.1–11; cf. [Aristotle] *Mag. Mor.* 2.4–6. Cf. also Philo *Somm.* I 124: *ἐγκράτεια* the foundation of life; *Vit. cont.* 34: *ἐγκράτεια* the foundation upon which the other virtues are built; Sextus *Sent.* 86a: *ἐγκράτεια* the foundation of piety.

¹³⁵ Cf. Diogenes Laertius 8.9, 23; Iamblichus *VP* 187–213, 244; Timaeus Locrus *De univ. nat.* 102e–103b, p. 222.5–20 Thesleff; Bryson *Oecon.* 113–62, p. 58 Thesleff; Anonymus Diodori 5.2, p. 231 Thesleff; Sextus *Sent.*, passim; *Tabula of Cebes* 16. See also Richard Reitzenstein, *Historia Monachorum und Historia Lausiaca: Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Mönchtums und der frühchristlichen Begriffe Gnostiker und Pneumatiker* (FRLANT 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1916) 94–98 (on Neopythagoreanism); Petzke, *Apollonius von Tyana*, 218–221. Cf. further *GV* 67–68 with my commentary, below.

similar precepts in other gnostic texts or from discussions in philosophical works. What has to be controlled, is always the various ‘appetites’ and passions, anger in particular.¹³⁶ The emphasis in this precept is on control (*κρατεῖν*); mastering one’s irrational impulses is the first step towards a rational and conscious life. Lack of self-control, on the other hand, means that one is subjected to the tyranny of one’s passions.¹³⁷

πρώτιστα does not refer to the stomach (i.e., eating and drinking) in particular, but to this topos as a whole.¹³⁸ Together with the *μὲν* it indicates the *first* virtue to be mastered, the second being introduced by *εἶτα* in GV 13.¹³⁹ As indicated above, *ἐγκράτεια* was considered by some to be the starting point of all virtue. Hierocles, on the other hand, argues that there is a causal development from over-indulgence in eating to that in sleeping, sex, and eventually anger.¹⁴⁰ Although this view is somewhat far-fetched, there is no denying the emphasis on the stomach in our various sources. Sextus also explicitly associates the stomach with sex: “As you rule over your stomach, so you will rule over your sexual desires” (*Sent.* 240). In a fragment of the ‘Orphic’ poet

¹³⁶ Cf. the definitions in Plato *Symp.* 196c: εἶναι γὰρ ὁμολογεῖται σωφροσύνη τὸ κρατεῖν ἡδονῶν καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν; *Resp.* 430e: κόσμος πού τις, ἣν δ’ ἐγώ, ἡ σωφροσύνη ἐστὶ καὶ ἡδονῶν τινῶν καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν ἐγκράτεια. For gnostic material, cf. *Praecepta Delphica* (= *SIG* 3.1268) 1.2, 5: θυμοῦ κράτει, ἡδονῆς κράτει; Democritus frg. 236 DK: θυμῷ μάχεσθαι μὲν χαλεπὸν· ἀνδρὸς δὲ τὸ κρατεῖν εὐλογίστον; [Isocrates] *Demonic.* 21: ὅφ’ ὧν κρατεῖσθαι τὴν ψυχὴν αἰσχρόν, τούτων ἐγκράτειαν ἄσκει πάντων, κέρδους, ὀργῆς, ἡδονῆς, λύπης; Chares frg. 2.2: γαστρὸς δὲ πειρῷ ἡνίαν κρατεῖν; 2.5–6: ὅστις δὲ γαστρὸς μὴ κρατεῖν ἐπίσταται, οὗτος τὰ πλείω τῶν κακῶν ἔχει κακά; Menander *Sent.* 269: ζήσεις βίον κράτιστον, ἣν θυμοῦ κρατῆς; 425: καλὸν γε γαστρὸς ἀπιθυμίας κρατεῖν (cf. also 22, 99, 137, 348, 876); Sextus *Sent.* 70: κράτει τῶν ἡδονῶν; 240: ὡς ἂν γαστρὸς ἄρξης, καὶ ἀφροδισίων ἄρξης; 253b: ἔστιν σοφοῦ καὶ ὕπνος ἐγκράτεια (cf. also 270, 428); *Vit. Aesop.* (G) 109, p. 69 Perry: θυμοῦ κράτει. For philosophical writings, cf. Xenophon *Mem.* 2.1.1: Socrates exhorted his companions ἀσκεῖν ἐγκράτειαν βρωτοῦ καὶ ποτοῦ καὶ λαγνείας καὶ ὕπνου καὶ ῥίγους καὶ θάλπους καὶ πόνου. Cf. also *Mem.* 2.6.1 (stomach, love of drinking, lust, sleep, idleness); 1.2.1 (stomach and sex); Philo *Quod det.* 101; *Spec. leg.* II 195 (food, drink, sex, tongue); Plutarch *De liber. educ.* 7.7e (pleasure, anger). According to Aristotle self-indulgence refers in the first place to bodily pleasures and pains; of other kinds of self-indulgence, anger is the most blameworthy (*Eth. Nic.* 1147b20–1149b26; cf. *Mag. Mor.* 1202b1–28).

¹³⁷ Cf. *Pyth. Sent.* 21, 23, 71, quoted in Porphyry *Marc.* 34.

¹³⁸ Contra Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 50. Cf. also Nauck, “Über die goldenen Sprüche,” 478.

¹³⁹ See on this construction Denniston, *Greek Particles*, 376–77; cf. also GV 1–2 above. Van der Horst has a different view (*Vers d’or*, 11).

¹⁴⁰ Hierocles in *CA* 8.1.

Linus, we even have the same *μὲν πρότιστ(α)* following a reference to the stomach: *νηδὺν μὲν πρότιστ', αἰσχροῶν δώτειραν ἀπάντων, ἣν ἐπιθυμία ἡνιοχεῖ μάργοισι χαλινοῖς* ("... the stomach first, giver of all things shameful, which desire drives on with greedy bridle").¹⁴¹ Later in the *Golden Verses* the author returns to the question of moderation in food and drink (*GV* 32–34; cf. also *GV* 67). On the whole, however, the list given in *GV* 10–11 is representative rather than exhaustive or causally linked. Sleep, apart from being associated with sex, is also connected with sloth,¹⁴² while anger is dangerous because in this state one can easily lose control of oneself. Its importance is emphasized here by the prominent position of *θυμοῦ* at the beginning of *GV* 11. Considerable attention is given to the control of anger among Greco-Roman authors, as is evidenced by a number of treatises on this subject.¹⁴³

11–12 The psychological corollary of self-discipline is self-respect, here viewed under its negative aspect as an attitude which restrains actions involving shame.¹⁴⁴ Since 'shame' could easily be taken as a completely external norm of behavior, in that one avoids what is shameful simply in order not to acquire a bad reputation,¹⁴⁵ the author adds "nor on your own." The following precept (*GV* 12b) is even more explicit: the criterion for what is acceptable should be internalized; one should be one's own judge, and not depend on the evaluation of society. What is emphasized here, is the role of the conscience in determining what is right and

¹⁴¹ Linus frg. 10.9–10 West (*νηδὺν* Valckenaer: ἥδη codd.).

¹⁴² Cf. Prov 6:9–11. In the *akousmata* there is a great emphasis on labor as opposed to pleasure; cf. Aristotle ap. Iamblichus *VP* 85: ἀγαθὸν οἱ πόνοι, αἱ δὲ ἡδοναὶ ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου κακόν· ἐπὶ κολάσει γὰρ ἐλθόντας δεῖ κολασθῆναι ("Labors are good, but pleasures are bad in every respect; for, having come for punishment, people should be punished").

¹⁴³ E.g., Philodemus *De ira*; Seneca *De ira*; Plutarch *De cohibenda ira*; *Mor.* frg. 148; Galen *Affect. dignot.* (devoted primarily to anger). Numerous books on the subject were to be found in Cicero's time; cf. *QFr.* 1.1.37.

¹⁴⁴ On the relationship between *σωφροσύνη* and shame (*αἰδώς*), see North, *Sophrosyne*, Subject Index, s.v. 'Aidōs.' A good discussion of the various terms used in connection with shame through the end of the 5th century BC is to be found in Carl Eduard von Erffa, *Αἰδώς und verwandte Begriffe in ihrer Entwicklung von Homer bis Demokrit* (Philologus Supplementband 30/2; Leipzig: Dieterich, 1937); see also Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 1.168–84, 215.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Xenophon *Cyr.* 8.1.31: those who possess *αἰδώς* refrain from what is disgraceful in public; those who possess *σωφροσύνη* restrain themselves even in private; see on this also North, *Sophrosyne*, 92. The Stoics made a similar distinction between *αἰδώς* and *αἰσχύνη*; cf. *SVF* 3.416.

wrong,¹⁴⁶ more precisely, that of prospective conscience, which is able to anticipate shame, and therefore refrains from the bad.¹⁴⁷ It is noteworthy that this section of the poem (GV 9-49b) begins with a reference to prospective conscience and ends with a subsection on retrospective conscience (GV 40-44).

αἰσχρόν is often found within the topos of σωφροσύνη as a description of unrestrained acts and their results. It may therefore refer to sexual matters also,¹⁴⁸ but it usually has a more general connotation.¹⁴⁹ The expression σεαυτὸν αἰσχύνεσθαι goes back at least as far as Democritus; there is indeed a remarkable similarity between GV 11-12 and, for example, Democritus fragment 244:

φᾶῦλον, κἄν μόνος ᾗς, μήτε λέξης μήτ' ἐργάσῃ· μάθε δὲ πολὺ μᾶλλον τῶν ἄλλων σεαυτὸν αἰσχύνεσθαι.

Do not say or do anything base, even if you are alone; learn to be ashamed before yourself far more than before others.¹⁵⁰

With Democritus the meaning of shame changes; it henceforth represents the internalization of the νόμος, as a result of which man applies the strictures of the law to himself without outside pressure:

μηδέν τι μᾶλλον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους αἰδεῖσθαι ἑωυτοῦ μηδέ τι μᾶλλον ἐξεργάζεσθαι κακόν, εἰ μέλλει μηδεὶς εἰδῆσειν ἢ οἱ πάντες ἄνθρωποι· ἀλλ' ἑωυτὸν μάλιστα αἰδεῖσθαι, καὶ τοῦτον νόμον τῇ ψυχῇ καθεστά-

¹⁴⁶ GV 12 is quoted by Stobaeus under the heading *περὶ τοῦ συνειδότος* (Stobaeus 3.24.2). On conscience in general, see Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 1.208-29; Friedrich Zucker, *Syneidesis-Conscientia: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte des sittlichen Bewußtseins im griechischen und im griechisch-römischen Altertum* (Jenaer Akademische Reden 6; Jena: Fischer, 1928); Henry Chadwick, "Gewissen," *RAC* 10 (1978) 1025-1107; Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 209 n. 149.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 23: "Αἰδώς can be defined as a collective and prospective conscience which persuades man to apply the moral standards of his society to a situation where he has to act." See also Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 1.215. Zucker seems to imply, however, that GV 12 refers to *retrospective* conscience (*Syneidesis-Conscientia*, 10 n. 18).

¹⁴⁸ So P. W. van der Horst on this verse (*Pseudo-Phocylides*, 166).

¹⁴⁹ Cf. [Isocrates] *Demonic*. 21: ὑφ' ᾧν κρατεῖσθαι τὴν ψυχὴν αἰσχρόν, τούτων ἐγκράτειαν ἄσκει πάντων (also 15, 16); Pseudo-Phocylides 76: σωφροσύνην ἄσκειν, αἰσχρῶν δ' ἔργων ἀπέχεσθαι (also 145); Menander *Sent.* 24; von Erffa, *ΑΙΔΩΣ*, passim.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. also Democritus frgs. 84 (in which reference is also made to αἰσχρά) and 264 DK. The similarities between the *Golden Verses* and Democritus have been pointed out by Diehl in his 1923 edition of the *Golden Verses* (*Anthologia lyrica* 1.2.187n); by Wilhelm Nestle in his review of *Les vers d'or pythagoriciens*, by P. C. van der Horst (*Philologische Wochenschrift* 44 [1934] 1221); and by Burkert (*Lore and Science*, 215 n. 26).

ναι, ὥστε μηδὲν ποιεῖν ἀνεπιτήδειον.

[One ought] not to be more ashamed before men than before oneself, and not do anything evil more readily if no one will know than if all men will, but [one ought] to be ashamed before oneself most of all, and establish this as law in one's soul, to do nothing that is not fitting. (frg. 264 DK)¹⁵¹

The expression 'to feel shame before yourself' is also often found later in the gnomic tradition; as an attitude it was indeed considered one of the goals of a philosophical education.¹⁵²

GV 13-16

εἴτα δικαιοσύνην ἀσκεῖν ἔργῳ τε λόγῳ τε,
μηδ' ἀλογίστως σαντὸν ἔχειν περὶ μηδὲν ἔθιξε,
ἀλλὰ γυνῶθι μέν, ὡς θανέειν πέπρωται ἅπανιν,
χρήματα δ' ἄλλοτε μὲν κτᾶσθαι φιλεῖ, ἄλλοτ' ὀλέσθαι.

Furthermore, practice justice both in deed and in word,
and accustom yourself not to be without thought about anything,
but know that death has been destined for all,
and that property is wont to be acquired now, tomorrow lost.¹⁵³

13 Although the virtue of justice is represented by only one verse, its importance should not be underrated. It is the only virtue mentioned by name, and it is also to some extent implied in the next three verses. On the other hand, this virtue is the social virtue par excellence; its sphere of application lies in conduct *πρὸς ἕτερον*.¹⁵⁴ It is therefore perhaps to be expected that it

¹⁵¹ For a discussion of the Democritus fragments relevant to our topic, consult von Erffa, ΑΙΔΩΣ, 197-99. Interestingly enough, Ammonius and Elias quote GV 9-10 and 12 to support their statement that the ethical man *lays down laws for himself* (Ammonius in *Porph.*, p. 15.17-20; Elias in *Porph.* 12, p. 34).

¹⁵² Cf. *Praecepta septem sapientium* ap. Stobaeus 3.1.173, p. 128.2: σεαντὸν αἰδοῦ; Theophrastus ap. Stobaeus 3.31.10: αἰδοῦ σαντόν, καὶ ἄλλον οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσῃ; Cato ap. Stobaeus 3.31.11: μάλιστα δ' ἐνόμιζε δεῖν ἕκαστον αἰδεῖσθαι ἑαυτόν· μηδένα γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ μηδέποτε χωρὶς εἶναι; Musonius ap. Stobaeus 3.31.6 (= "Ἀριστον καὶ πρῶτον μάθημα 3): αἰδοῦς παρὰ πᾶσιν ἄξιος ἔσῃ, ἐὰν πρῶτον ἄρξῃ σαντὸν αἰδεῖσθαι; Philemon frg. 229 Kock: ὅστις γὰρ αὐτὸς αὐτὸν οὐκ αἰσχύνεται συνειδῶν αὐτῷ φαῦλα διαπεπραγμένῳ, πῶς τὸν γε μηδὲν εἰδὼτ' αἰσχυνθήσεται; (= Diphilus ap. Stobaeus 3.24.1); cf. also [Isocrates] *Demonic.* 16: μηδέποτε μηδὲν αἰσχροὺν ποιήσας ἔλπιζε λήσειν· καὶ γὰρ ὅν τοὺς ἄλλους λάθῃς, σεαυτῷ συνειδῶσαι. For 'shame' as something taught by philosophy, cf. Democritus frg. 179 DK; Bryson *Oecon.* 113-14, p. 58 Thesleff; Musonius Rufus frg. 8, p. 62.18 Lutz. Pythagoras is attributed with a work titled *Skopiades* which begins as follows: μὴ ... ἀναίδειν μηδενί (cf. Diogenes Laertius 8.8).

¹⁵³ Cf. Méautis, *Sagesse pythagoricienne*, 17: "Mais sache ... que la fortune a coutume tantôt de s'accroître, tantôt de disparaître."

¹⁵⁴ See Albrecht Dihle, "Gerechtigkeit," *RAC* 10 (1978) 233-360, esp. 250-52. This ar-

receives so scant attention in a section with a heavy emphasis on individual morality.

Before we continue, we should first look at the connection between this and the previous cluster.¹⁵⁵ As we have seen in the discussion of the previous verses, self-control is presented as the internalization of the principles regulating society; these principles are precisely what justice was considered to entail.¹⁵⁶ Self-control or *σωφροσύνη* thus represents the internal principle of moral control, with justice as its external, social manifestation. Furthermore, self-respect was considered a more desirable motive for acting with justice than fear of punishment.¹⁵⁷ Despite the fact that there is no overt connection between the clusters on *σωφροσύνη* and justice, such a connection does therefore exist on a semantic or ideological level.¹⁵⁸

In Greek ethical thinking *δικαιοσύνη* is a virtue of great importance. Aristotle devotes Book 5 of his *Nicomachean Ethics* as well as Book 3 of his *Politics* to a discussion of justice, and Plato's *Republic* is also to a large extent concerned with this virtue.¹⁵⁹ It is considered by some the all-encompassing virtue, a view first expressed by Theognis: *ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνῃ συλλήβδην πᾶς ἀρετὴ ἔστι* ("In justice all virtue is subsumed").¹⁶⁰ The popular definition of *δικαιοσύνη* is 'to render to each his due';¹⁶¹ injustice is therefore often defined as wanting more than one's due, that is, as greed or *πλεονεξία*.¹⁶² As may be expected, the exercise of jus-

ticle is one of the best surveys of the ancient material on this virtue. Cf. also idem, *Kanon der zwei Tugenden*, esp. pp. 10-14; Schwartz, *Ethik der Griechen*, 56-57; Gottlob Schrenk, "*δικαιοσύνη*," *TDNT* 2.192-210.

¹⁵⁵ According to Delatte, "le vers 13 ..., qui paraît se rattacher aux vers précédents, en réalité n'a avec eux aucun rapport de précepte" (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 50).

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Dihle, "Gerechtigkeit," 250-52.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Dihle, "Gerechtigkeit," 252; Iamblichus VP 48.

¹⁵⁸ For "the closeness of *sophrosyne* and justice in ... Greek thought," see North, *Sophrosyne*, 9, 87, 189. Cf. also Acts 24:25 (*διαλεγόμενου αὐτοῦ* [sc. Παύλου] *περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας*); *Corp. Herm.* 13.18.

¹⁵⁹ See Dihle, "Gerechtigkeit," 255-63.

¹⁶⁰ Theognis 147 (= Phocylides frg. 10 Diehl). Cf. also Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 1129b27: *πολλὰκις κρατίστη τῶν ἀρετῶν εἶναι δοκεῖ ἡ δικαιοσύνη*.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Plato *Resp.* 331e: *τὸ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἐκάστω ἀποδιδόναι δίκαιόν ἐστι*; Aristotle *Rh.* 1366b: *ἔστι δὲ δικαιοσύνη μὲν ἀρετὴ δι' ἣν τὰ αὐτῶν ἕκαστοι ἔχουσι, καὶ ὡς νόμος*.

¹⁶² See Schwartz, *Ethik der Griechen*, 57; K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974) 170; Ceslas Spicq, *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire* (2 vols. with a supplement; OBO 22/1-3 (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1978-82) 2.706; Dihle, "Gerechtigkeit," 262, 269-71; Karl Suso Frank, "Habsucht (Geiz)," *RAC* 13 (1986) 226-47.

tice is frequently mentioned in gnomic material.¹⁶³

Pythagoreans also make much of justice. Iamblichus therefore devotes a long chapter of his *De vita Pythagorica* (chap. 30 = sections 167–86) to Pythagoras' teachings on justice, which emphasize equality, the sharing of property,¹⁶⁴ and keeping the law.¹⁶⁵ Of particular interest are the expressions reminiscent of GV 13: Pythagoras showed "how one should practice justice" (ὅπως δεῖ [δικαιοσύνην] ἀσκεῖν)¹⁶⁶ and "he took great trouble with practicing justice ... in deeds and in words" (μεγάλην σπουδὴν περὶ τὴν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἄσκησιν ... πεποιημένος Πυθαγόρας ὡς ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις).¹⁶⁷ We note further that δικαιοσύνη is the Pythagorean name for the number four, and that the relationships between the sides of a rectangular triangle express the concept of justice.¹⁶⁸ The *akousma* "Do not step over the beam of a balance," was interpreted by some to mean "One should give greatest heed to justice and not transgress it."¹⁶⁹ In the *Pseudopythagorica*, as in Greek ethics in general, δικαιοσύνη denotes a relationship towards others in which greed (πλεονεξία) is curtailed.¹⁷⁰

The verb ἀσκεῖν should be understood as an imperatival infinitive (cf. also GV 29, 40). The alternative, namely, to take it as the first of two infinitives dependent on ἔθιξε in GV 14, is less satisfactory because of the difference in construction between the two sentences.¹⁷¹ Although the verb ἀσκέω literally means "practise,

¹⁶³ Cf. Theognis 145–48, 197–202, 456–66, 753; [Isocrates] *Demonic*. 15; Pseudo-Phocylides 21; Sextus *Sent.* 64.

¹⁶⁴ Iamblichus VP 167–68; cf. esp. 167: ἀρχὴ τοίνυν ἐστὶ δικαιοσύνης μὲν τὸ κοινὸν καὶ ἴσον καὶ τὸ ἐγγυτάτω ἐνὸς σώματος καὶ μιᾶς ψυχῆς ὁμοπαθεῖν πάντας, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἐμὸν φθέγγεσθαι καὶ τὸ ἀλλότριον.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 171–76; cf. esp. 171: νομῷ βοηθεῖν καὶ ἀνομίᾳ πολεμεῖν.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 179; cf. also 186: παντὰ τὰ δίκαια ... ἀσκεῖν.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 186 *fine*; cf. also 176.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 179; cf. also *Theol. ar.* 23.

¹⁶⁹ Iamblichus VP 186; cf. Plutarch *De liber. educ.* 17.12e. For a different interpretation, cf. Boehm, "De symbolis Pythagoreis," 37–38.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Theages *De virt.*, p. 191.3–21 Thesleff; Clinias, *De piet.*, p. 108.12 Thesleff; also Ecceus, *De iust.*, pp. 77–78 Thesleff. A discussion of the first two authors is given by S. Tzitzis, "L'éthique comme mesure dans l'idée de justice chez les pythagoriciens," in *Justifications de l'éthique* (XIX^e Congrès de l'Association des sociétés de philosophie de langue française, Bruxelles-Louvain-La-Neuve, 6–9 septembre 1982; Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1984) 443–48.

¹⁷¹ Cf. also van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 11.

exercise, train, ... properly of athletic exercise,” its metaphorical use is very common.¹⁷² The expression ἀσκεῖν δικαιοσύνην is already found in Herodotus and Plato and is also frequently used by later authors.¹⁷³ The underlying idea is that virtue has to be exercised just like the body, in order to make spiritual progress.¹⁷⁴

The expression ‘both in deed and in word’ is also a common one,¹⁷⁵ the basic idea being that one’s words and one’s deeds have to agree.¹⁷⁶ The same expression recurs repeatedly in the *Golden Verses* (cf. GV 6, 25), and the topic itself is alluded to more than once (cf. GV 21-24, 26, 27).

14-16 The next three verses focus on the virtue of moral insight, φρόνησις,¹⁷⁷ which entails an insight into the human condition that enables one to make morally responsible choices.¹⁷⁸ The virtue is first stated in negative terms (GV 14), and then positively (GV 15), thus constituting the figure of *correctio*.¹⁷⁹ Two γινῶμαι express the content of the required insight (GV 15b-16). Since previous scholars have complained about the lack of coherence between these three verses, the relations between them will be discussed as

¹⁷² LSJ, s.v. ἀσκέω II. See Hermigild Dressler, *The Usage of ΑΣΚΕΩ and Its Cognates in Greek Documents to 100 A.D.* (Catholic University of America Patristics Studies 78; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), esp. pp. 71, 78-79, which contain references to the *Golden Verses*; Hieronymus, “MEΛΕΘΗ,” 4-7, 39-59; van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 166.

¹⁷³ Herodotus 1.96, 7.209; Plato *Grg.* 527e, *Resp.* 407a. References to later authors may be found in Bauer-Aland, s.v. ἀσκέω. To this we may add *Praecepta Amenoti* 1-2 (ed. Ulrich Wilcken, “Zur ägyptisch-hellenistischen Litteratur,” in *Aegyptiaca: Festschrift für Georg Ebers zum 1. März 1897* [Leipzig: Engelmann, 1897] 142-52): φρόνησιν ὅσκει μετὰ δικαιοσύνης. Cf. also Sextus *Sent.* 64: ὅσκει μὴ τὸ δοκεῖν ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶναι δίκαιος; 606: δικαιοσύνην ἔργῳ μᾶλλον ἢ λόγῳ ὅσκει.

¹⁷⁴ See Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 55; Daniel A. Dombrowski, “Asceticism as Athletic Training in Plotinus,” *ANRW* II.36.1 (1987) 701-12. Musonius frg. 6 (περὶ ἀσκήσεως) contains a discussion of the relation between physical training and practicing virtue.

¹⁷⁵ See LSJ, s.vv. ἔργον I.4; λόγος VI.1c; Bauer-Aland, s.v. ἔργον 1a.

¹⁷⁶ Cf., e.g., Democritus frg. 82 DK: κίβδηλοι καὶ ἀγαθοφάνεις οἱ λόγῳ μὲν ἅπαντα, ἔργῳ δὲ οὐδὲν ἔρδοντες (“False and hypocritical are they who do everything in words, but nothing in deeds”); also Sextus *Sent.* 64 (quoted n. 173 above). On this topos, see also Hans Dieter Betz, *Lukian von Samosata und das Neue Testament: Religionsgeschichtliche und paränetische Parallelen. Ein Beitrag zum Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti* (TU 76; Berlin: Akademie, 1961) 114-16.

¹⁷⁷ Hierocles also identifies GV 14-15a with the virtue of φρόνησις, but according to him GV 15b and 16 deal with the virtues of ἀνδρεία and σωφροσύνη respectively. GV 13-16 thus contain all the cardinal virtues in his view (cf. in *CA* 10.16).

¹⁷⁸ See Schwartz, *Ethik der Griechen*, 57-58; Georg Bertram, “φρήν κτλ,” *TDNT* 9.220-35, esp. 221-24.

¹⁷⁹ See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, §§ 784-86.

thoroughly as possible.¹⁸⁰

The two precepts enjoining the practice of *φρόνησις* are closely related; the interpretation of the first therefore depends on that of the second. “Not to be without thought about anything”¹⁸¹ here means that one has to consider the implications and consequences of one’s actions in the light of the limitations (such as those referred to in *GV* 15–16) imposed by the human condition.¹⁸² Nothing should be done blindly, without calculation; every action should be thought through. This rationalization of one’s life should be a continual process; it is only arrived at as the result of habituation (*σαντὸν ἔχειν ... ἔθιζε*).¹⁸³ This topos is developed in greater detail in *GV* 27–44. It also lies in the background of *GV* 50–60 (esp. *GV* 53), and it is referred to again in *GV* 68–69.

The second precept states what precisely the student has to know about the human condition. This knowledge is given in the form of two *γνώμαι*. The first of these refers to the most basic and pervasive aspect of the human condition, namely, the universality of death.¹⁸⁴ This is the most significant factor which dis-

¹⁸⁰ Nauck remarks sarcastically: *V. 14–16 quale sit istius poetae ingenium luculentissime monstrant* (“De aureo carmine,” 211). Delatte expresses surprise about the juxtaposition of the ideas on death and on wealth: “Le rapport des deux idées exprimées ici est extrêmement lointain et on s’étonne que le poète les ait unies si étroitement” (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 51). Van der Horst is more sympathetic, but he is also uncomfortable with the combination of these two ideas: “La combinaison de ces deux pensées peut nous sembler étrange, mais il faut se rendre compte que le poète s’était placé au centre même de la vie pratique. Il enseigne la morale, mais il donne en même temps des leçons de pratique sur la manière de vivre, deux choses qui paraissent mal s’accorder; mais si nous voulons arriver à comprendre le poète, ni l’une ni l’autre ne peut être négligée” (*Vers d’or*, 12).

¹⁸¹ Although the negative *μηδ’* is grammatically connected to the imperative (i.e., “Do not accustom yourself to be thoughtless”), it should be understood with the infinitive. This construction is common in Greek; cf. Kühner-Gerth 2.180, Anm. 3.

¹⁸² The same connection between ‘thoughtlessness’ and the human condition is made in Democritus frg. 289 DK: *ἀλογιστίη μὴ ξυγχωρέειν ταῖσι κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀνάγκαις*; Menander *Sent.* 284: *ζῶμεν ἀλογίστως προσδοκῶντες μὴ θανεῖν*.

¹⁸³ Cf. I. Hadot, “Spiritual Guide,” 454: “Extreme attentiveness and consciousness were desired. Not a single moment of daily life was to pass by without rational control....” This ‘attentiveness’ was especially practiced by the Stoics, who called it *προσοχή*; see P. Hadot, *Exercices spirituels*, 19–21. For the construction of *ἐθίζειν* with *ἐαυτόν* and infinitive, see LSJ, s.v. *ἐθίζω*; for its use in gnomic material, cf. [Isocrates] *Demonic.* 15; Sextus *Sent.* 412, 445. The same precept is given in positive terms in Sextus *Sent.* 69: *εὐλογιστίαν ἄσκει*.

¹⁸⁴ For this topos in the gnomic tradition, cf. [Isocrates] *Demonic.* 43: *τὸ μὲν γὰρ τελευτῆσαι πάντων ἢ πεπρωμένη κατέκρινε*; Menander *Sent.* 110: *βροτοῖς ἅπασι κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται*. Cf. also Pseudo-Phocylides 109–13; *Men. et Phil. Comp.* 2.166–74. See in general Rudolf Bultmann, “θάνατος κτλ,” *TDNT* 3.7–25, esp. 8–9: “In Greek thought death is not originally understood as a natural phenomenon but as the particular lot of human existence with which we all have to reckon.” The term *πέπρωται* has been used since Homer to

tinguishes human beings, the mortals, from gods, the immortals.¹⁸⁵ The γνώμη is therefore simply an interpretation of the well-known Delphic precept γνώθι σαυτόν ("Know yourself"). The latter received two basic interpretations in antiquity: The first and earlier interpretation is that one should know one's limitations vis-à-vis the gods; it is therefore a warning against *hybris*: "Le sens qui apparaît dans les textes les plus anciens est une invitation à se reconnaître mortel et non dieu, c'est-à-dire à éviter l'ὑβρις, la démesure contraire à la δίκη et punie par la divinité."¹⁸⁶ The second, later interpretation (already found in Plato *Alc. I* 132cd) is that one should be aware of one's divine origin and that one should strive to regain that former status.¹⁸⁷ The former interpretation is obviously meant here.¹⁸⁸

Contemplation of one's mortality (μελετᾶν ἀποθνήσκειν; *meditare mortem*) forms an important exercise in the psychagogic process; it enables one, *inter alia*, to enjoy the present, no matter what the circumstances, and to live a morally responsible life.¹⁸⁹ In this context, it finds its immediate application as regards the attitude towards wealth. The theme of human mortality is again addressed in the last part of the poem, especially GV 70-71.

One way of overcoming the limitations of the human condition and of ensconcing oneself against the vicissitudes of life is by

"speak of the general fate of all mortals that consists in death" (B. C. Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods: The Development of a Religious Idea in Greek Popular Belief and in Homer* [University of London Classical Studies 3; London: Athlone, 1965] 282; cf. also p. 278).

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 201; quoted n. 25 above.

¹⁸⁶ Pierre Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même de Socrate à Saint Bernard* (3 vols.; Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1974-75) 1.12. Cf. also the scholion on Pindar *Pyth.* 3.106: ὅμοιον τῷ Χίλωνος ἀποφθέγματι τῷ Γνώθι σαυτόν, τὸ δὲ ὅλον ὅτι θνητοὶ πεφύκαμεν (quoted by Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même* 1.13 n. 11). Cf. further Dover, *Popular Morality*, 269: "What the Greeks called 'knowing oneself' is recognition of one's own limitations...."

¹⁸⁷ See Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même* 1.15.

¹⁸⁸ The author of the *Golden Verses* was also aware of the second interpretation, however; cf. GV 50-71.

¹⁸⁹ See Bultmann, "θάνατος," 9-11; Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 116; P. Hadot, *Exercices spirituels*, 37-47; I. Hadot, "Spiritual Guide," 450-51. For a 'Pythagorean' version, cf. Zaleucus *Prooem.* frg. 3, p. 227.8-14 Thesleff: [χρῆ] τίθεσθαι πρὸ ὀμμάτων τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον, ἐν ᾧ γίνεται τὸ τέλος ἐκάστῳ τῆς ἀπαλλαγῆς τοῦ ζῆν. πᾶσι γὰρ ἐμπίπτει μεταμέλεια τοῖς μέλλονσι τελευτᾶν, μεμνημένοις ὧν ἡδικήκασιν, καὶ ὁρμὴ τοῦ βούλεσθαι πάντα πεπράχθαι δικαίως αὐτοῖς. διὸ δεῖ ἕκαστον παρ' ἐκάστην πρᾶξιν αἰεὶ συνοικεῖν τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ὡς δὴ παρόντα· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν μάλιστα τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ τοῦ δικαίου φροντιεῖν ("One should keep that time before one's eyes, when the end, namely, the departure from life, occurs. For all who are on the point of dying experience remorse when they remember the wrongs they committed, and an urge to wish that they had done everything in a just manner. Therefore everyone should in each action relate it to that time as if it were indeed present; for thus one would best take thought for what is good and just").

amassing wealth. The futility of this approach is pointed out in *GV* 16: wealth can no more be controlled than anything else in life; it has, as it were, a will of its own (cf. *φιλεῖ*, 'is wont to'). This second *γνώμη* thus formulates a belief widely held in the gnomic tradition, namely, that wealth is not to be relied on because of its instability.¹⁹⁰ The first *γνώμη* indeed provides another reason why the accumulation of wealth as a goal in itself is imprudent: one cannot take it beyond the grave;¹⁹¹ one should therefore concentrate on a virtuous life instead, since this cannot be lost through a change in fortune.¹⁹²

GV 14–16 are clearly intended as a warning to act in a certain manner in the light of the insight given into the human condition. Although this warning is open-ended, here, following directly upon *GV* 13,¹⁹³ it is also implicitly aimed against *ὑβρις* on the one hand (*GV* 15), and against *unjust gain* (*κέρδος*, *πλεονεξία*) (*GV* 16) on the other. Both *ὑβρις* and *πλεονεξία* are aspects of *injustice*.¹⁹⁴ What is more, the topos of universal death is elsewhere

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Pseudo-Phocylides 27: ὁ βίος τροχός· ἄστατος ὄλβος (see also the commentary by van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 132–33); *Vit. Aesop.* (W) 110, p. 102.9 Perry: καιρὸς γὰρ παρέχει καὶ πάλιν ἀφαιρείται; Theognis 315–18, esp. 318: χρήματα δ' ἀνθρώπων ἄλλοτε ἄλλος ἔχει. Jutta Krause comments as follows on the Theognis passage: "Einer äusseren Ursache für die Unbeständigkeit der χρήματα ... bedarf es nicht; diese Instabilität ist eine immanente Eigenschaft der χρήματα" (ΑΛΛΟΤΕ ΑΛΛΟΣ: *Untersuchungen zum Motiv des Schicksalswechsels in der griechischen Dichtung bis Euripides* [Tuduv Studien, Reihe Kulturwissenschaften 4; Munich: Tuduv, 1976] 89). See on this topic also Dover, *Popular Morality*, 174; Raymond Bogaert, "Geld (Geldwirtschaft)," *RAC* 9 (1976) 797–907, esp. 823–30. For the combination of φρόνησις and wealth, cf. *Gnom. Vat.* 462: οὐ αὐτὸς (sc. Πυθαγόρας) ἔφη μήθ' ἵππον χωρὶς χαλινῶν μήτε πλοῦτον δίχα φρονήσεως δύνασθαι κρατεῖσθαι.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Menander *Sent.* 87: ἀπῆλθεν οὐδεὶς τῶν βροτῶν πλοῦτον φέρων; Pseudo-Phocylides 110: οὐκ ἔτι εἰς "Αἶδην ὄλβον καὶ χρήματα ἄγεσθαι (see also the commentary by van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 192–93); Theognis 725–26. See Betz, *Lukian von Samosata*, 194–99, on Cynic-Stoic paraenesis against wealth. Lucian often combines the topoi of wealth and death in his satires; see *ibid.*, esp. 195 n. 4: "Die Reichen gebärden sich, als lebten sie ewig, und sind infolgedessen überrascht, wenn sie plötzlich sterben und alle Schätze über der Erde zurücklassen müssen." Betz also refers to Luke 12:16–21, the parable of the rich fool (*ibid.*, 198).

¹⁹² Cf. Theognis 315–18, 465–66: ἀμφ' ἀρετῇ τρίβον καὶ τοι τὰ δίκαια φίλ' ἔστω, μήδε σε νικᾷτω κέρδος, ὃ τ' αἰσχρὸν ἔη; *Vit. Aesop.* (G) 110, p. 69 Perry: ἐπὶ σωφροσύνῃ μεγαλοφρόνει, μὴ ἐπὶ χρήμασι· τὰ μὲν καιρὸς ἀφείλετο, ἡ δὲ ἀπόρρητος διαμένει. The same idea, though differently expressed, is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount; see Matt 6:19–21.

¹⁹³ *GV* 14–16 are connected to the previous verse both syntactically by means of the *μηδ'*, and stylistically by means of the *paronomasia* provided by *λόγῳ* ... *ἀλογίστως*.

¹⁹⁴ For *ὑβρις* as injustice towards the gods, see Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même* 1.12 (quoted p. 137 above). *πλεονεξία*, on the other hand, was seen as injustice towards men; see p. 133, esp. n. 162 above. Theognis in particular often mentions the (mis)use of wealth and

also employed to warn against greed.¹⁹⁵ Later on in the poem, the author returns to the question of the rightful use of wealth (see *GV* 35-38).

15 Cobet correctly observes that the *μὲν* in *GV* 15 (corresponding to the *δ'* in *GV* 16) should have been positioned after *θανέειν*, since the two facts that are correlated are (a) universal death and (b) the fickleness of property.¹⁹⁶ As it stands, *knowing* is contrasted with the instability of property. The principles determining the positioning of *μὲν* and *δέ* are often violated, however, particularly in verse, "where order is partly determined by metrical convenience."¹⁹⁷

16 As we have seen in chapter 5, *κτᾶσθαι* as a passive is unusual.¹⁹⁸ Scholars therefore attempt to circumvent the problem by changing the text, the most common change being to read *φίλει*, a second person singular imperative, instead of *φιλεῖ*, a third person singular indicative.¹⁹⁹ The resulting text would mean "Love to make money at one moment, and to lose it at another," which does not make much sense. The problem with this text is furthermore that *ὀλέσθαι*, a medium, does not mean 'to lose,' but 'to be lost';²⁰⁰ for the former meaning we need the active *ὀλέσσαι*, which necessitates still another change.²⁰¹ The simplest solution is

(in)justice together; cf. *Theognis* 145-48, 197-202, 315-18, 465-66, 753. Cf. also [Isocrates] *Demonica*. 38-39.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Pindar *Nem.* 7.17-20a: σοφοὶ δὲ μέλλοντα τριταῖον ἄνεμον / ἔμαθον, οὐδ' ὑπὸ κέρδει βλάβειν / ἀφνερὸς πενιχρὸς τε θανάτου πέρας / ἅμα νέονται. The *σοφοί* are prudent people who have learned to take the future into account and who are therefore not harmed by a desire for momentary gain. Here, as in the *Golden Verses*, death is the ultimate future that has to be kept in mind. Cf. further Pseudo-Phocylides 109-10; Luke 12:16-21.

¹⁹⁶ Cobet, *Collectanea critica*, 465. Van der Horst suggests that the *δέ* corresponding to the *μὲν* is not the one in *GV* 16, but that in *GV* 17 (*Vers d'or*, 11). However, this procedure would coordinate *GV* 15 and 17, and subordinate them both to the command of *GV* 14, which is nonsensical.

¹⁹⁷ Denniston, *Greek Particles*, 371-72. For ἄλλοτε μὲν ... ἄλλοτ' in *GV* 16, without a corresponding *δέ*, cf. *Theognis* 158; Denniston, *Greek Particles*, 377.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 208-9: *Traductum labentis Graecitatis est indicum*.

¹⁹⁹ Thus Mullach (*FPG* 1.194, where the readings proposed by earlier editors are also noted) and Farina (*Versi aurei*, 22, 37 n. 15), following M and lesser manuscripts. It also seems to be the reading on which the Arabic translation is based; see Ullmann, "Griechische Spruchdichtung," 57.

²⁰⁰ See LSJ, s.v. ὀλλυμι.

²⁰¹ This conjecture, first proposed by Hieronymus Wolf, is accepted by Mullach; see n. 199 above. Apparently it also underlies the Arabic translation. Farina, however, retains the original reading, oblivious of the problem. Delatte admits that the original version of this verse (i.e., in the *Ἱερὸς λόγος*) was the one proposed by Wolf and Mullach, but he argues

therefore to leave the text as it is, and to accept the fact that *κτᾶσθαι* is here passive, unusual though that may be.²⁰²

In as much as the student has to be aware of the misery of the human condition (the ubiquitous nature of death, the uncertainty of prosperity), he also has to be prepared for it, in order not to be caught unawares by any misfortune. *GV* 15–16 thus also allude to yet another spiritual exercise, the *praemeditatio malorum*,²⁰³ which was particularly practiced by the Pythagoreans. Aristoxenus has the following testimony:

ἦν αὐτοῖς παράγγελμα, ὥς οὐδὲν δεῖ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων συμπτωμάτων ἀπροσδόκητον εἶναι παρὰ τοῖς νοῦν ἔχουσιν, ἀλλὰ πάντα προσδοκᾶν, ὧν μὴ τυγχάνουσιν κύριοι ὄντες.

They had a precept, that no human misfortune should be unexpected to those with understanding, but that they should expect everything over which they themselves are not in control.²⁰⁴

The Pythagorean *akousma* “Keep the bedclothes tied up every day” was also interpreted as a practice in preparedness for death.²⁰⁵

GV 17–20

ὅσσα δὲ δαιμονίαισι τύχαις βροτοὶ ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν,
ἦν ἂν μοῖραν ἔχης, ταύτην φέρε μὴ δ' ἀγανάκτει.
ἰᾶσθαι δὲ πρέπει καθ' ὅσον δύνῃ, ὧδε δὲ φράζευ'
οὐ πάνν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τούτων πολὺ Μοῖρα δίδωσιν.

But whatever pains mortals suffer through the divine workings of fate, whatever lot you have, bear it and do not be angry.

It is fitting that it be healed as far as possible, and say to yourself as follows:

that the author of the *Golden Verses* changed it to the manuscript reading, or had received a version that had already been changed (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 51).

²⁰² It is also used as a passive in Cassius Dio 38.38, Herodianus 1.8.2, and Synesius *De providentia* 125c, as Nauck has noted (“De aureo carmine,” 208–9).

²⁰³ For the *praemeditatio malorum*, see Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 160–79; for the Pythagorean practice, esp. pp. 160–61, 164; I. Hadot, *Tradition der Seelenleitung*, 60–61; P. Hadot, *Exercices spirituels*, 21. According to Rabbow, we have to distinguish between the *praemeditatio* as an individual act in which possible future mishaps are consciously brought to mind, and the *meditare mortem* as a general disposition which keeps the mortal nature of human beings in mind (*Seelenführung*, 306 n. 37). On the other hand, Rabbow also speaks of a “*Praemeditation der Todesstunde*” (*ibid.*, 164), so that his own thought on this subject is not free of ambiguity.

²⁰⁴ Aristoxenus ap. Iamblichus *VP* 196 (cf. also 224) = DK 58D6.

²⁰⁵ See Hippolytus *Haer.* 6.27.2–3; Porphyry ap. Stobaeus 1.49.59.

Fate does not give very many of these sufferings to the good.

The reference to the apparent caprice of one's fortune in GV 16 leads naturally to instructions on how to deal with one's fate, particularly if it entails suffering.²⁰⁶ The problem of fate, that is, the rationale behind a man's circumstances, whether prosperous or the opposite, occupied Greek thought from the very beginning.²⁰⁷

The spectacle, and still more the experience, of life's vicissitudes has always been the parent of perplexity. Disappointed hopes, the prosperity of the wicked, the suffering of the innocent, even the little ironies of circumstance, invite men to question whether the ultimate power in the universe is good or evil.²⁰⁸

According to Greene, the Greeks gave at least three answers to this question: the first was to follow "the path of caution, of the quiet life, of resignation and passive endurance"; the second was to attempt to justify the present in terms of either a protological past or an eschatological future; the third, the acceptance of a radical humanism.²⁰⁹ The author of the *Golden Verses* chooses the first option. In this cluster he emphasizes that suffering has to be borne without becoming angry, but later in the poem he also indicates the psychological causes of suffering (GV 54–59).

Bearing up under misfortune falls under the heading of fortitude (καρτερία) which is a species of *moral courage* (ἀνδρεία),²¹⁰ the last of the cardinal virtues to receive attention in this part of the poem. This subsection also contains a *consolatio in nuce*.²¹¹ The student is exhorted to bear misfortune, indeed his lot in gen-

²⁰⁶ The connection between GV 17–20 and the verses immediately preceding is suggested by several lexical correspondences: βροτοί refers back to θανέειν; τύχαις, μοῖραν, and Μοῖρα to πέπρωται; and ἄλγε(α) to ὀλέσθαι.

²⁰⁷ For the Greek concept of fate, see Gundel, "Heimarmene," PW 7 (1912) 2622–45; Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* (2d ed.; 2 vols.; 1955; reprint, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984) 2.294–305; S. Eitrem, "Moirā," PW 15.2 (1932) 2449–97; idem, "Schicksalsmächte," SO 13 (1934) 47–64; William Chase Greene, *Moirā: Fate, Good, and Evil in Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944); Gertrud Herzog-Hauser, "Tyche," PW 7A2 (1948) 1643–89; Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods*; H. O. Schröder, "Fatum (Heimarmene)," RAC 7 (1969) 524–636; Krause, ΑΛΛΟΤΕ ΑΛΛΟΣ.

²⁰⁸ Greene, *Moirā*, 5.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 5–6.

²¹⁰ See Michel Spanneut, "Geduld," RAC 9 (1976) 243–94, esp. 245.

²¹¹ This interpretation is supported by the fact that Plutarch quotes GV 17–18 in his *Consol. ad Apoll.* 29.116e. Delatte also points out the consolatory function of GV 20 (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 52).

eral, without resentment, because sufferings are divinely apportioned, and what is more, they are limited as far as the good are concerned.

17–18 A twofold shift occurs between the first and second relative clauses. Firstly, there is a change from the general ('mortals') to the specific ('you'), secondly, a movement in the opposite direction from the more specific 'whatever pains' to the more inclusive 'whatever lot.'²¹² This latter shift is also underlined by the change from the indicative to the indefinite subjunctive. Furthermore, the second relative clause supersedes the first, as is indicated by the use of the demonstrative pronoun *ταύτην* in the main clause, which, strictly speaking, refers only to *ἤν* and not to *ὅσσα*. This constitutes a *correctio*: it is not only people in general who have to bear with adversities, but you, in particular, have to bear your lot, whatever that may be.²¹³

δαιμονίαισι τύχαις indicates the cause of the suffering to distinguish it from suffering of man's own making.²¹⁴ In the Greek mind the unexpected, the incalculable, did not just happen of its own; it was due to some supernatural force which they identified with fate. Fate was therefore often personified, as is the case in *GV* 20.²¹⁵ *δαιμόνιος* means 'heaven-sent' or 'divine'; it usually

²¹² The difference between *τύχη* (*GV* 17) and *μοῖρα* (*GV* 18) is often that of the more specific event as against the whole of one's life; see Eitrem, "Schicksalsmächte," 48–50. According to Lionel Pearson, "the word *moira* is used by post-Homeric poets almost exclusively to denote man's destiny, the portion of life allotted to him by the gods, which he must receive without fear or complaint" (*Popular Ethics in Ancient Greece* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962] 70).

²¹³ The reading of *M* and of Stobaeus (*ὧν ἂν μοῖραν ἔλῃς, πρῶς φέρε*, "That of which you have chosen a part, bear mildly") is an attempt to bring *GV* 18 in line with *GV* 54 ("You will know that the miseries men suffer are self-chosen").

²¹⁴ According to Aristoxenus frg. 41 Wehrli, the Pythagoreans said "that there is a certain divine part of fate; for certain people are inspired by the deity to act for better or for worse, and for this very reason some are clearly fortunate, and others unfortunate" (*εἶναι μὲν τι καὶ δαιμόνιον μέρος [τύχης]· γενέσθαι γὰρ ἐπίπνοιάν τινα παρὰ τοῦ δαιμονίου τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐνίοις ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον καὶ εἶναι φανερώς κατ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο τοὺς μὲν εὐτυχεῖς, τοὺς δὲ ἀτυχεῖς*). Wehrli interprets this statement to imply that there also exists a *τύχης μέρος μὴ δαιμόνιον*, "das rein äussere Schicksal im vorwiegend hellenistischen Sinne, das der menschliche *νοῦς* mehr oder weniger zu korrigieren vermag" (*Aristoxenos*, 62).

²¹⁵ "Das Unberechenbare jedes Menschenschicksals, das sich nicht durch menschliche Logik und Ethik, ja nicht einmal durch die Willensfreiheit der ewigen Götter erklären lässt, wird durch die Personifikation der *M[oir]*a sozusagen auf sich selbst gestellt und in eine übermenschliche Sphäre gehoben" (Eitrem, "Moir," 2450). *Moir*a personified and the impersonal *μοῖρα* (meaning 'share') are often to be found side by side in Homer; see Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods*, 61. On *Moir*a in general, see also his chap. 3 ("Moir; the Moirae").

has a neutral meaning, but it can also denote something negative.²¹⁶ In Plato, for instance, *δαιμονία τύχη* is used to mean 'ill fortune.'²¹⁷ In this context, the term may still have some connection with its etymological base *δαίμων*, in view of the close relationship posited later in the poem between one's fate and one's *δαίμων* (GV 61-62).²¹⁸

Painful events, indeed, the whole of one's lot, have to be endured without resentment, that is, with courage, with an inner nobility.²¹⁹ At the basis of this precept lies the Greek anthropological doctrine that man is powerless in the face of heaven-sent events; since he cannot change them, he demonstrates his inner strength by accepting them rather than fighting the inevitable.²²⁰ The Pythagoreans, as did many other Greeks, added an additional motive:

²¹⁶ See LSJ, s.v. *δαιμόνιος*. It is therefore often a synonym for *θεῖος*; cf., e.g., Sophocles *Phil.* 1326: *σὺ γὰρ νοσεῖς τόδ' ἄλγος ἐκ θείας τύχης*.

²¹⁷ Cf. Plato *Hp. mai.* 304b. See also Greene, *Moirai*, 12: "The adjective *daimonios* is regularly used [in Homer] of what is incomprehensible or blameworthy." The negative connotation is also reinforced by the use of the plural *τύχαις*; cf. Herzog-Hauser, "Tyche," 1646: "Im Plural sind sehr häufig 'Schicksalsschläge' gemeint (*τύχαι* = *δυστυχίαι*)."

²¹⁸ On the close connection between fate and *δαίμων*, see Wilamowitz, *Glaube der Hellenen* 1.358-64; Eitrem, "Schicksalsmächte," 48-50; Krause, *ΑΛΛΟΤΕ ΑΛΛΟΣ*, 81-82; Paolo Cosenza, "'Demone' e 'sorte' nella scuola pitagorica," in *Esistenza e destino nel pensiero greco arcaico* (ed. Paolo Cosenza; Pubblicazioni dell'Università degli studi di Salerno, Sezione atti, convegni, miscellanee 9; Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1985) 7-31.

²¹⁹ According to Iamblichus *VP* 190, the Pythagoreans "knew that courage [*ἀνδρείαν*] is knowledge of what is to be avoided, and what is to be endured." Cf. also Stobaeus 4.44.17, where GV 17-18 are quoted under the heading *ὅτι δεῖ γενναίως φέρειν τὰ προσπίποντα ὄντας ἀνθρώπους καὶ κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῆν ὀφείλοντας*. (The first part of this title is actually a definition of *ἀνδρεία*; see *LPGL*, s.v. *ἀνδρεία*.) The whole of Stobaeus' chap. 44 contains much that is similar in sentiment to these verses. For other gnostic texts, cf. Cleobulus ap. Diogenes Laertius 1.93: *τὰς μεταβολὰς τῆς τύχης γενναίως ἐπίστασο φέρειν*; Theognis 355-60, 441-46, 555-56, 591-94, 817-18, 1029-36; Democritus frg. 289 DK; [Isocrates] *Demonic.* 42: *λυποῦ δὲ μετρίως ἐπὶ τοῖς γιγνομένοις τῶν κακῶν*; *Vit. Aesop.* (W) 109, p. 101.32-33 Perry: *τὰ δὲ συμβαίνοντα ἀνδρὶ γενναίως δεῖ φέρειν* (cf. also 110, p. 102.12-13). See on the topic Dover, *Greek Popular Morality*, 167-69 ("Endurance of misfortune").

²²⁰ Cf. *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 147-48: *Μαῖα θεῶν μὲν δῶρα καὶ ἀχνύμενοι περ ἀνάγκη / τέτλαμεν ἄνθρωποι· δὴ γὰρ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰσιν*. See also the commentary on this passage by Richardson, who states that this emphasis on men's helplessness often led to "a kind of 'gospel of resignation' which places the responsibility in the hands of the gods, or of some impersonal agency, Necessity.... But the answer to this is given by Demeter herself ...: it is mortals who by their folly and ignorance of their destiny ... bring disaster ... upon themselves, and prevent the gods from assisting them" (*Hymn to Demeter*, 192-94; quotation from p. 193). A very similar answer is given by the author of the *Golden Verses* in GV 54-62. See further Krause, *ΑΛΛΟΤΕ ΑΛΛΟΣ*, 54-57.

οὐδὲν ᾧοντο ἐκ ταῦτομάτου συμβαίνειν καὶ ἀπο τύχης, ἀλλὰ κατὰ θεῖαν πρόνοιαν, μάλιστα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ εὐσεβεῖσι τῶν ἀνθρώπων.... ἐπιστημονικὸν γὰρ τοῦτο ἡγεῖτο μᾶλλον καὶ εὐνῳμον, τὸ μὴ ἀντιτείνειν καὶ προσαγανακτεῖν τῇ θεῇ προνοίᾳ.

They thought that nothing happened by accident or by chance, but every event is due to divine providence, especially for good and pious people. [Pythagoras] therefore considered it sensible and prudent not to resist and become angry at divine providence. (Iamblichus *VP* 145)

Since this doctrine could easily result in resignation and fatalism, the next verses are meant to counter such an attitude.²²¹

19 *ἰᾶσθαι* is ambiguous. What exactly has to be ‘healed,’ and what does ‘healing’ mean in this context? A first possibility is that one’s *anger* (*ἀγανάκτει*) has to be healed. That anger (or any other passion) has to be ‘healed’ by the use of reason, is a commonplace in Greek thought,²²² and it was also a sentiment ascribed to by the Pythagoreans. The latter explicitly demanded the healing of distress or anger that arose as a result of unexpected events.²²³

Secondly, the ‘healing’ can apply to the *pains* mentioned in *GV* 17, that is, to remedy one’s situation.²²⁴ A related, but more radi-

²²¹ See Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 52: *GV* 19 “est une correction au principe de la résignation.”

²²² Cf. Democritus frg. 31 DK: *ιατρικὴ μὲν σώματος νόσους ἀκέεται, σοφίη δὲ ψυχὴν παθῶν ἀφαιρεῖται* (“Medicine heals the sicknesses of the body; but wisdom rids the soul of its passions”); Menander *Sent.* 587: *ὁ λόγος ἱατρός ἐστι τοῦ κατὰ ψυχὴν πάθους*; 445: *λύπη γὰρ εὖνους οἶδε θεραπεύειν λόγος*; *Gnom. Byz.* 113 = *Gnom. hom.* 67: *τὸν λογισμὸν ὥσπερ ἱατρὸν ἀγαθὸν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι δεῖ ἐν ἀτυχίᾳ βοηθόν*; further also Menander *Sent.* 46, 439, 452, 454, 476, 840; *Vit. Aesop.* (W) 110, p. 102.14–15 Perry. ‘Healing’ is often used metaphorically “v[on] der Befreiung v[on] allerlei sonstigen Uebeln” (Bauer-Aland, s.v. *ἰάσθαι* 2). See also the literature on this topos (“il tema ‘cura dell’ira’ nell’antichità”) cited by Marcello Gigante, “‘Philosophia medicans’ in Filodemo,” *CronErc* 5 (1975) 60 n. 149. For a discussion of the close connection between medicine and ethics in Antiquity, see Hadot, *Tradition der Seelenleitung*, 13–16; Martha Nussbaum, “Therapeutic Arguments: Epicurus and Aristotle,” in *The Norms of Nature: Studies in Hellenistic Ethics* (ed. Malcolm Schofield and Gisela Striker; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 31–74. See in general Fridolf Kudlien, “Der Arzt des Körpers und der Arzt der Seele,” *CM* 3 (1968) 1–20.

²²³ Cf. Iamblichus *VP* 196: *ἦν αὐτοῖς παράγγελμα, ὥς οὐδὲν δεῖ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων συμπτωμάτων ἀπροσδόκητον εἶναι παρὰ τοῖς νοῦν ἔχουσιν, ἀλλὰ πάντα προσδοκᾶν, ὧν μὴ τυγχάνουσιν κύριοι ὄντες. εἰ δὲ ποτε αὐτοῖς συμβαίῃ ἡ ὀργή ἢ λύπη ἢ ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον, ἐκποδῶν ἀπηλλάττοντο, καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἕκαστος γενόμενος ἐπειράτο καταπέττειν τε καὶ ἱατρεῦειν τὸ πάθος*. Cf. also *VP* 70, 224–25.

²²⁴ In this regard we may compare Plutarch *De superst.* 7.168c: the superstitious man attributes all misfortune to the gods and refuses to do anything to *relieve* his situation (οὐδὲ τολμᾷ βοηθεῖν οὐδὲ διαλύειν τὸ συμβεβηκὸς οὐδὲ θεραπεύειν οὐδ’ ἀντιτάττεσθαι). An interpretation along similar lines is proposed by Delatte: “Le maître ... demande qu’on réagisse ... pour corriger autant que possible les mauvais coups du sort” (*Littérature pythagoricienne*,

cal solution, is to understand *ταύτην* as object of *ἰᾶσθαι*; one should remedy one's *lot* as such.²²⁵ Support for this notion comes from a description of what might be a Pythagorean doctrine: *ἐκ μὲν τῆς μαντικῆς πρόνοιαν ἔφασσαν δεῖν ἐπιζητεῖν, ἐκ δὲ τῆς ἰατρικῆς τῆς τε προνοίας ἐπανόρθωσιν* ("They said that one should inquire into providence by means of the mantic art, and should search for a correction of providence by means of the healing art").²²⁶ This hypothesis is further strengthened by the proximity of *ταύτην* (GV 18) to *ἰᾶσθαι* and the fact that GV 61–62 seem to allude to a similar doctrine.

The expression *καθ' ὅσον δύνη* is reminiscent of the Platonic doctrine of *ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν* (*Tht.* 176b), which acknowledges the limitations of human endeavor (cf. also GV 8a).²²⁷ *φράζειν* belongs to the same semantic field as *γνώθι* (GV 15), and is a demand for insight; its reflexive character, however, also lends itself to be used as a self-consolation. The content of the insight (GV 20) is once again given in the form of a *γνώμη*. Consoling and 'healing' by means of sayings was a common psychagogic practice.²²⁸

20 The notion that there is a limit to the suffering²²⁹ of good people is, as we have seen, a characteristically Pythagorean idea, being based on their doctrine of providence.²³⁰ This notion is also

52). Cf. also the translations by Farina: "E bene che tu li lenisca per quanto è possibile" (*Versi aurei*, 37); and by H. Schmitz: "Heile davon, soviel du kannst" (in van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 150). We find this interpretation already in Iamblichus Arab. in *CA* f. 304^v and in Proclus Arab. in *CA* f. 101^r.

²²⁵ This is the interpretation given by Méautis: "Il convenient ... que tu corriges ton destin autant que tu le peux" (*Sagesse pythagoricienne*, 18).

²²⁶ Stobaeus 3.1.71. Meineke conjectured that this passage came from Aristoxenus' *Πυθαγορικὰ ἀποφάσεις*; see Curt Wachsmuth and Otto Hense, eds., *Ioannes Stobaeus: Anthologium* (5 vols.; Berlin: Weidmann, 1884–1912) 3.29n. This conjecture is accepted by Delatte (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 52 n. 2).

²²⁷ Van der Horst discusses the question whether *δύνη* here and in GV 8 is indicative or subjunctive—without, however, arriving at a definite conclusion (*Vers d'or*, 8–9).

²²⁸ See Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 194: "Es sind, wie man sieht, kurze, pointierte Formulierungen der Hilfsgedanken, Heilformeln, die als 'Spruch' gegen Lebensangriff und -versuchung hergesagt werden.... Die Psychagogik berührt sich in diesem Terminus [*ἐπιλέγειν*—und sie selbst sagt es aus—mit dem Brauch des Kults und Zaubers, in dem die heilige Formel 'zur' heiligen Handlung 'gesprochen' (*ἐπιλέγειν*) und der Angriff von Leiden und Krankheit 'besprochen' wird (*ἐπιλέγειν*, *ἐπρόδειν*) durch Sprüche, die zu sprechen und zu raunen sind." See in general *ibid.*, 189–208 ("Selbstbeeinflussung durch verbale Akte").

²²⁹ *τούτων* refers to ἄλγεα in GV 17.

²³⁰ Cf. Iamblichus *VP* 145, quoted p. 144 above; also *VP* 137.

implied in *GV* 54. We find the idea that Fate is on the side of the wise and the good elsewhere as well, but rather in the form “Fate helps those that help themselves.”²³¹ The statement as it stands in *GV* 20, is not representative of Greek thought in general. In *GV* 57 the author again refers to the impact of fate on men’s lives, but there he points out how fate harms those without insight.

3 *Moral Insight and the Power of Speech (GV 21–26)*

The next section (*GV* 21–26) deals with the student’s reaction to sayings of various kinds. The young and morally insecure may be diversely affected by what they hear from other people; in this section the author gives the principle to follow when confronted with such utterances.

There are several problems of interpretation concerning these verses. One such problem is whether this section as a whole has to do with both good and bad sayings (as we may be led to expect from the first verse), or whether it focuses on bad utterances only. Our answer will depend on the meanings we give to *ἐκπλήσσειο* (*GV* 22) and *εὔργεσθαι* (*GV* 23), how we explain the genitive *ῶν* (*GV* 22), as well as on the antecedent we attach to *ὃ* (*GV* 24).

A further problem is the connection between these verses and the previous or following sections. The previous section, as we have seen, contains precepts regarding the cardinal virtues, while the following section treats two of these virtues, *φρόνησις* and *σωφροσύνη*, in more detail. One would therefore expect this section also to deal with an aspect of virtue.

GV 21–26

πολλοὶ δ' ἀνθρώποισι λόγοι δειλοὶ τε καὶ ἐσθλοὶ
προσπίπτουσ', ὧν μήτ' ἐκπλήσσειο μήτ' ἄρ' ἐάσης
εὔργεσθαι σαντόν. ψεῦδος δ' ἦν πέρ τι λέγεται,
πράως εἶχ'. ὃ δέ τοι ἐρέω, ἐπὶ παντὶ τελείσθω·
μηδεὶς μήτε λόγῳ σε παρείπη μήτε τι ἔργῳ
πρήξαι μηδ' εἰπεῖν, ὃ τί τοι μὴ βέλτερόν ἐστιν.

²³¹ Cf. Sophocles frg. 302 Nauck: οὐκ ἔστι τοῖς μὴ δρώσι σύμμαχος τύχη; Menander *Sent.* 637: πᾶσιν γὰρ εὖ φρονούσιν συμμαχεῖ τύχη; Theognis 589–90: τῷ δὲ καλῶς ποιεῦντι θεὸς περὶ πάντα τίθησιν / συντυχὴν ἀγαθὴν, ἔκλυσεν ἀφροσύνης.

Many words assail human beings, bad as well as good.
 Do not be dumbfounded by them, nor allow
 yourself to be hindered. If in fact something false is said,
 withdraw amiably. Let what I shall tell you, however, be accomplished
 in every instance:
 Let no one persuade you either by word or even by deed
 to do or to say whatever is not best for you.

21–23a In GV 21–23a the author emphasizes two aspects of other people's utterances—they are both numerous and morally diverse²³²—and he warns the student not to be unduly overwhelmed and disturbed by this. In the following verses he then gives directions on how to handle teachings.

λόγοι here has the general meaning of 'utterances,' that is, instances of human speech, without being specified further.²³³ The verb προσπίπτω (used of news) can mean 'come to one's ears,'²³⁴ but here a more aggressive meaning appears to be required.²³⁵ People are confronted with a plethora of utterances which may easily confuse them. The student has to resist such confusion, because it may lead to either credulity or to skepticism.

The second half of the sentence (GV 22b–23a) contains several difficulties. In the first place, the relative pronoun ὧν can be construed in one of two ways: it may be connected with both ἐκπλήσσειο and εἵργεσθαι or only with the former. The use of the genitive case for ὧν is also problematic. The verb ἐκπλήσσομαι is never used with the genitive, but with the accusative or dative or some prepositional phrase instead. The second verb (εἵργεσθαι) can govern the genitive, but it would be unusual for the genitive to

²³² This is reinforced stylistically by the construction of GV 21, in which λόγοι occupies the central position, flanked by πολλοί and by δειλοί τε καὶ ἐσθλοί in the first and last positions respectively.

²³³ See LSJ, s.v. λόγος VI. Delatte (referring to Philolaus frg. 16 DK) interprets λόγοι as 'ideas.' This interpretation is only possible because Delatte considers GV 21–26 to consist of four discrete sayings that originally had no connection (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 53–55). In its present context, however, the term has to be related to the verb 'to say'; cf. GV 23, 25. Proclus Arabus, on the other hand, interprets λόγοι δειλοί τε καὶ ἐσθλοί as 'expressions of praise and blame' (Linley, *Proclus' Commentary*, 57). Although this would fit in fairly well with the rest of the passage, it is doubtful whether the phrase, without any further qualification, can have this meaning.

²³⁴ So van der Horst, referring to Aeschines 3.59; Polybius 4.85.5, 5.101.3; [Longinus] 29: "προσπίπτειν signifie ici: 'arriver à la connaissance de, être appris'" (*Vers d'or*, 16); cf. also LSJ, s.v. προσπίπτω II.5. This interpretation is criticized by Puech, unfortunately without indicating his own preference (*JS* [1933] 271).

²³⁵ For this more active meaning of προσπίπτω, see LSJ, s.v., II.1.

be dependent on a verb thus far removed. Furthermore, the meanings of both ἐκπλήσσειο and εἵργεσθαι, as well as their relation to δειλοί and ἐσθλοί, are ambiguous in this context. ἐκπλήσσομαι can mean 'be amazed, astounded' in a positive or a negative sense. The imperative ἐκπλήσσειο could therefore refer to either δειλοί or ἐσθλοί. εἵργεσθαι presents more of a problem. The passive of εἵργω can mean 'to be shut in,' 'to be shut out,' 'to be excluded from participation in' (with genitive), or 'to be hindered'; the medium can mean 'to keep oneself, to abstain, to withdraw from' (with genitive).²³⁶ None of these meanings is an obvious fit in the present context.

Having set out the problems, let us consider some of the solutions offered by previous scholars. Hierocles takes the genitive as an ablatival genitive dependent on εἵργεσθαι,²³⁷ and he connects ἐκπλήσσειο with δειλοί and εἵργεσθαι with ἐσθλοί:

τὸ Πυθαγορικὸν τηρήσομεν παράγγελμα μήτε ἐκπληττόμενοι τοὺς πονηροὺς τῶν λόγων καὶ δι' αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὅτι λόγοι εἰσὶν, ἀκρίτως αὐτοὺς εἰσδεχόμενοι μήτε τῶν ἀγαθῶν εἰργόμενοι, διότι λόγοι ἦσαν ὁμοίως τοῖς χείροσιν.

We shall keep the Pythagorean command if we are not impressed by bad sayings and accept them uncritically simply because they are sayings, and if we do not withdraw from good sayings, [simply] because they are sayings like the bad. (Hierocles in *CA* 12.2)

This sentence therefore warns against an uncritical love of sayings (φιλολογία) on the one hand, and a hypercritical aversion to sayings (μισολογία) on the other. What it requires, is a knowledgeable discrimination (ἐπιστημονικῆς δεῖται διακρίσεως) among sayings.²³⁸

²³⁶ LSJ, s.v. ἔργω.

²³⁷ Although he does not say so, this would imply a zeugma: the ὧν, whose case depends on εἵργεσθαι only, is also used with ἐκπλήσσειο, where we would expect the accusative οὓς instead; see Lausberg, *Handbuch*, §§ 701–4 ("Syntaktisch kompliziertes Zeugma").

²³⁸ Hierocles in *CA* 12.1–2. A very similar line is taken by Plutarch in his treatise *De rect. rat. aud.* 13.44a–d. Interestingly enough, Plutarch refers to the misuse made by hypercritical persons of a Pythagorean saying: "For there are many who take that saying of Pythagoras wrongly and out of harmony with his meaning. He declared that he had gained this advantage from philosophy, to wonder at nothing [τὸ μηδὲν θαυμάζειν]; but these men think that their advantage gained is to commend nothing, to show respect for nothing, holding that immunity from wonder lies in disdain, and seeking to attain dignity by means of contempt. Now it is true that philosophic reasoning, through knowledge and acquaintance with the cause in every case, does away with the wonder and amazement [θαῦμα καὶ θάμβος] that spring from blindness and ignorance, but at the same time it does not destroy our seren-

Van der Horst, on the other hand, connects *ἐκπλήσσειο* chiastically with *ἐσθλοί* and *εἴργεσθαι* with *δειλοί*; the genitive *ὦν* should be construed with both verbs individually. He translates GV 21–23a as follows: “Les hommes apprennent à connaître toutes sortes de mots, des mots bons et mauvais; ne te laisse pas mettre hors de toi par l’admiration et ne te permets pas de t’en écarter.”²³⁹ Although van der Horst’s assumption of a chiasmic structure gives us a stylistically preferable composition, his translation of *ὦν ... εἴργεσθαι* as “de t’en écarter” is untenable in the light of the ablative nature of the genitive governed by *εἴργεσθαι*. A third position yet is taken by scholars like Méautis and Schmitz, who interpret both *ἐκπλήσσειο* and *εἴργεσθαι* as negative reactions.²⁴⁰

I think we may agree with Hierocles that these verses demand a circumspect attitude towards utterances; they should not be rejected or accepted without careful consideration.²⁴¹ On the other hand, I am less sanguine about the possibility to connect the two verbs as specifically with one or other of the adjectives as he and van der Horst do. Since taking the genitive with *εἴργεσθαι* creates difficulties, I suggest that it depends on *ἐκπλήσσειο* only. This solecism can perhaps be explained as influenced by the use of the genitive with synonymous verbs like *θανυμάζω*. The author warns against a precipitous reaction to sayings as such, whether they be good or bad. GV 21–23a also contain an implicit criticism against *πολυλογία*, loquacity; the Pythagorean ideal was *βραχυλογία*, brevity in speech.²⁴²

ity, moderation, or human interest” (ibid., 44b; trans. F. C. Babbitt, LCL).

²³⁹ Van der Horst, *Vers d’or*, 16–17.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Méautis, *Sagesse pythagoricienne*, 20: “Beaucoup de paroles se prononcent parmi les hommes, les unes mauvaises, les autres bonnes; qu’elles ne te troublent pas et ne te laisse pas influencer par elles”; Schmitz in van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 150: “Viele Reden kommen zu den Menschen, gute und schlechte. Laß dich dadurch nicht erschrecken und nicht abbringen vom Vorsatz.”

²⁴¹ An uncritical attitude as regards teachings is also criticized by Seneca: “There are indeed mistakes made through the fault of our advisers, who teach us how to debate and not how to live; there are also mistakes made by the pupils, who come to their teachers to develop, not their souls, but their wits. Thus the love of wisdom [*philosophia*] has become the love of words [*philologia*]” (Ep. 108.23; trans. R. M. Gummere, LCL, slightly adapted). This penchant for disputation, with its concomitant, a proliferation of *λόγοι*, originated in the sophistic movement; see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 312.

²⁴² Cf. *Sayings of Pythagoras in Syriac* 10 (Gildemeister, “Pythagorassprüche,” 87): *βραχὺν λόγον μάλιστα ἢ θεοῦ γνώσις ποιεῖ σημεῖον ἀμαθείας οἱ πολλοὶ λόγοι* (“Knowledge of god leads most of all to brevity in speech; many words are an indication of ignorance”); Sextus *Sent.* 155–57, 430–31. Luke Timothy Johnson, “Taciturnity and True

23b–24a In the previous sentence the author spoke about utterances in general; now he turns to false utterances in particular. Contrary to most commentators, I interpret *ψεῦδος τι* as ‘something false’ instead of ‘a lie,’ that is, as denoting some statement that is doctrinally incorrect, rather than a deliberate attempt to deceive.²⁴³ This use of *ψεῦδος* is common in Plato, and it would make much better sense in this context.²⁴⁴ The author is not exhorting his student to tolerate lies,²⁴⁵ but rather not to become involved in disputes.²⁴⁶ This interpretation also fits the meaning of *εἶχ'* (= *εἶκε*), namely, ‘yield,’ better. We find the juxtaposition of ‘yielding’ and ‘strife’ again in *GV* 59–60.

24b–26 Since ‘yield’ could be misunderstood to mean ‘allow yourself to be persuaded,’²⁴⁷ the author adds a qualification: one should never be persuaded to do anything bad (*GV* 25–26). This warning is emphasized in several ways. It is introduced by a categorical command (*GV* 24b), and it is further underlined by a copious repetition of negatives (*μηδεὶς, μήτε, μήτε, μηδ', μη*), as well as a chiasm formed by *λόγω-ἔργω-πρῆξι-εἰπεῖν*.

The clause *ὃ δέ τοι ἐρέω* is open to a number of interpretations. It may mean ‘what I shall say to you’ *in general*, that is, both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the poem; taken in this way, it would denote the teacher-student relationship as such, and *GV* 24b would serve to affirm the authority of the teacher/author. Although such an extratextual reference is not common, it is definitely made later in

Religion: James 1:26–27,” in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 329–39, gives valuable comparative material on the topos of *βραχυλογία* from ancient rhetoric, ethics, and religion, including Pythagoreanism; see esp. p. 333 n. 20.

²⁴³ *ψεῦδος* is understood as ‘lie’ by Delatte (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 53), van der Horst (*Vers d’or*, 17), and Méautis (*Sagesse pythagoricienne*, 21), while the translations by Mullach (*FPG* 1.194), Farina (*Versi aurei*, 37), and Schmitz (van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 150) are ambiguous. For the Greek distinction between lying (*ψεύδεται*) and saying something false (*ψεῦδος λέγει*), see Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 2.412.

²⁴⁴ See LSI, s.v. *ψεῦδος* III; cf. also *ibid.*, s.v. *ψευδής*: “The neut. sg. *ψευδές* is not found in early writers, *ψεῦδος* being used instead.”

²⁴⁵ This, as Delatte points out, would be in direct contradiction of other Pythagorean doctrines; cf., e.g., Porphyry *VP* 41; Iamblichus *VP* 47 (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 53).

²⁴⁶ An interesting and almost exact parallel is to be found in a late 2d millennium BC Akkadian wisdom text, *Counsels of Wisdom* 36 (ed. and trans. W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1960] 96–107): “When confronted with a dispute, go your way; pay no attention to it.”

²⁴⁷ Cf. the interpretation of *εἶκε* in *GV* 6 above. Cf. also Gal 2:5; *1 Clem* 56.1.

the poem (GV 67–68), and it would therefore not be inconceivable here. This interpretation would have had a firmer basis, however, if the indefinite subjunctive ('whatever I tell you') were used instead of the future indicative. This brings us to the next possibility: 'what I shall tell you' refers only to the *Golden Verses* itself.²⁴⁸ This would be a natural reading, but two objections may be brought against it. The first is that the use of the future seems to imply that only the *following* precepts should be obeyed absolutely ('what I shall say *from now on*'); the present tense would have been better (cf. *κελεύω* in GV 65). In the second place, the author always uses the plural elsewhere to refer to precepts contained in the poem, never the singular (cf. *ταῦτα*, *τῶνδε*, GV 9; *ταῦτα*, *ταῦτ'*, *τούτων*, GV 45; *τούτων*, GV 49; *ὧν*, GV 65b). A further problem with both these interpretations is that they do not do justice to the flow of the argument in GV 21–26; the reference, be it to the author's teaching in general or to the *Golden Verses*, is 'stuck in' between a precept concerning a false doctrine and one concerning attempts at persuading one to do something undesirable (both relating to the potential negative effects of words). There is a third possibility that accommodates the difficulties mentioned in a more satisfactory manner, namely, that the clause 'what I shall tell you' refers to the *immediately following* precept (GV 25–26), that is, 'what I shall tell you *now*.'²⁴⁹ If we read GV 24b in this way, this passage as a whole focuses on the negative potential of speech.

As I have indicated above, the final precept of this section is heavily underscored rhetorically. It encapsulates the criterion to be applied when evaluating teachings or advice: whatever does not lead to one's good (*ὅ τί τοι μὴ βέλτερόν ἐστιν*) should be disregarded.²⁵⁰ The same negative criterion occurs repeatedly in the

²⁴⁸ Both Delatte (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 53) and van der Horst (*Vers d'or*, 17) see here a contrast between lies the student may encounter and the author's own teaching, without distinguishing between the two possibilities mentioned so far.

²⁴⁹ For the use of the future tense to refer to what follows directly, cf. Hesiod *Op.* 286; Theognis 27, 1049. This last interpretation is indicated in Mullach, Nauck, and Diehl-Young's editions by placing a colon (:) after *τελείσθω*, as against the period in van der Horst's edition. Cf. further the translations by Mullach, Méautis, and Farina; only Schmitz's translation follows van der Horst. Hierocles also interprets GV 24b as referring to GV 25–26; cf. esp. in *CA* 13.16.

²⁵⁰ Cf. also the very similar command in Sextus *Sent.* 91a: *μηδεὶς σε πιθέτω ποιεῖν τι παρὰ τὸ βέλτιον*; and the statement in Menander *Sent.* 542: *χρηστὸς πονηροῖς οὐ τιτρώσκειται λόγοις* ('A good person is not harmed by bad words').

next section (cf. *μὴ μωρὰ, GV 27; ἅ σε μὴ μετέπειτ' ἀνιήσει, GV 29; ὃ μὴ σ' ἀνιήσει, GV 34; ἅ σε μὴ βλάψει, GV 39*).

We are now in a position to consider the relation between *GV 21–26* and the following passage. The present section exhorts the student to consider *other people's* instructions or advice critically before implementing them, the next to consider the possible effects of *one's own* impulses before acting upon them. The disposition required is very similar to that advocated in a well-known and often quoted passage in Hesiod:

οὗτος μὲν πανάριστος, ὃς αὐτὸς πάντα νοήσει,
θρασσάμενος τά κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἐς τέλος ἦσιν ἀμείνω·
ἔσθλός δ' αὖ καὶ κείνος, ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πίθηται·
ὃς δέ κε μήτ' αὐτὸς νοέη μήτ' ἄλλου ἀκούων
ἐν θυμῷ βιάλληται, ὃ δ' αὖτ' ἀχρήσιος ἀνὴρ.

Best of all is the man who perceives everything himself, taking account of what will be better in the long run and in the end. Good is he, too, who follows good advice. But he who neither perceives by himself nor takes in a lesson from another, he on the other hand is a worthless man. (*Op.* 293–97)²⁵¹

Both *GV 21–26* and the following section therefore deal with the need to make moral choices before one acts, that is, with the virtue of *φρόνησις*.²⁵²

4 *Deliberation and Reflection (GV 27–44)*

The next section (*GV 27–44*) contains further precepts relating to the virtues *φρόνησις* and *σωφροσύνη*. The first part (*GV 27–39*) deals with the need for deliberation *before* undertaking anything in order to avoid negative consequences, while the second (*GV 40–44*) enjoins the practice of retrospection and self-criticism.

According to Apollonius, these two practices formed a regular part of the daily routine of Pythagoreans:

μηδ' ἀπροβούλευτον μηδ' ἀνυπεύθυνον μηδὲν ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ πρῶι μὲν

²⁵¹ Trans. M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony and Works and Days* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) 45. See also West's commentary on this passage in idem, *Hesiod: Works and Days* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978) 230–32.

²⁵² Cf. also Stobaeus 3.3.21, where *GV 21–26* together with *GV 39* (i.e., a verse from the next section) are quoted under the heading *περὶ φρονήσεως*.

προχειρίζεσθαι τί πρακτέον, εἰς δὲ τὴν νύκτα ἀναλογίζεσθαι τί διψή-
κασιν.

They did nothing unpremeditated or that will not bear investigation; on the contrary, early in the day they determined what had to be done, and into the night they considered what they had accomplished. (ap. Iamblichus VP 256)²⁵³

Porphyry also cites these practices; in fact, he not only quotes GV 40–42 as an example of their doctrine on *retrospection in the evening*, but also a couplet concerning *deliberation in the morning* to balance the former:

δύο τε μάλιστα καιροὺς παρηγγύα ἐν φροντίδι θέσθαι, τὸν μὲν ὅτε εἰς
ὑπνον τρέποιο, τὸν δ' ὅτε ἐξ ὑπνου διανίσταιο. ἐπισκοπεῖν γὰρ προσ-
ήκειν ἐν ἑκατέρῳ τούτοις τά τε ἤδη πεπραγμένα καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα, τῶν
μὲν γενομένων εὐθύνας παρ' ἑαυτοῦ ἕκαστον λαμβάνοντα, τῶν δὲ
μελλόντων πρόνοιαν ποιούμενον. πρὸ μὲν οὖν τοῦ ὑπνου ταῦτα ἑαυτῷ
τὰ ἔπη ἐπάδειν ἕκαστον·

[GV 40–42]

πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἐξαναστάσεως ἐκεῖνα·

πρῶτα μὲν ἐξ ὑπνοιο μελίφρονος ἐξυπαναστὰς
εὖ μάλ' ὀπιπεύειν ὅς' ἐν ἡματι ἔργα τελέσειεις.

He [sc. Pythagoras] recommended that two moments in particular be kept in mind, the one when one goes to sleep, the other when one gets up from sleep. During each of these everyone should examine what has been done already and what lies ahead, giving account to himself of what has been done, and making provision for that which awaits. Before sleep therefore, everyone chanted these verses to himself:

[Porphyry then quotes GV 40–42];

and before getting up, these:

First of all, when you arise from sweet sleep,
consider well the deeds you will accomplish that day.²⁵⁴

Regular morning and evening sessions of deliberation and reflection came to be practiced by other philosophers, such as Sextius and his student Seneca, Galen, and Marcus Aurelius, as well.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ It is usually accepted that the Apollonius cited by Iamblichus and used by Porphyry, is the Neopythagorean of Tyana; cf. Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 100. This position has been contested by Wyttenbach and Méautis, and again recently by Peter Gorman ("The 'Apollonios' of the Neoplatonic Biographies of Pythagoras," *Mnemosyne* 38 [1985] 130–44).

²⁵⁴ Porphyry VP 40. Cf. also Jerome c. *Rufin.* 3.39.47–49: *Duorumque temporum maxime habendam curam, mane et vesperi, eorum quae acturi sumus et eorum quae gesserimus.*

²⁵⁵ Cf. Seneca *Dial.* 5.36; Galen *Affect. dignoi.* 5.6: ἀλλ' ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ βέλτιον εἶναι [δοκεῖ] μακρῷ <τὸν βουλόμενον ὥς> ἐπὶ πολὺ ἔχειν ἄνευ τῶν εἰρημένων παθῶν πρῶτον

We find an adaptation of this practice in monasticism, where one had to examine one's conscience twice daily.²⁵⁶ One may also wonder whether morning and evening sessions of silent contemplation did not develop as a secularization of morning and evening prayers which were common in the Greco-Roman tradition, in Judaism, and in early Christianity.²⁵⁷

4.1 *Deliberation on Deeds and Consequences (GV 27–39)*

GV 27–39 are clearly demarcated as a sub-unit by means of the figure of *inclusio* formed by the first and last verses (cf. esp. βουλεύου δὲ πρὸ ἔργου, GV 27a; λόγισαι δὲ πρὸ ἔργου, GV 39c). Besides laying down the general principle of predeliberation (GV 27–31, 39), the author also gives more specific rules for living in a manner that precludes harmful consequences (GV 32–38).

GV 27–31

βουλεύου δὲ πρὸ ἔργου, ὅπως μὴ μωρὰ πέληται·
 δειλοῦ τοι πράσσειν τε λέγειν τ' ἀνόητα πρὸς ἀνδρός.
 ἀλλὰ τὰδ' ἐκτελέειν, ἃ σε μὴ μετέπειτ' ἀνιήσει.
 πράσσε δὲ μηδὲ ἐν ὧν μὴ ἐπίστασαι, ἀλλὰ διδάσκειν
 ὅσσα χρεῶν, καὶτερπνότεον βίον ὧδε διάξεις.

Deliberate before the deed, lest foolish things result from it.

It is typical of a worthless man indeed to do or to say senseless things.

But bring that to completion which will not distress you afterwards.

Do not do even one thing²⁵⁸ of what you do not understand, but learn²⁵⁹ what is necessary, and thus you will lead a most enjoyable life.

In these verses we first find a general precept concerning delibera-

μὲν ἐξαναστάντα τῆς κοίτης ἐπισκοπεῖσθαι πρὸ πάντων τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν ἔργων, ὅρα βελτιόν ἐστι πάθεισι δουλεύοντα ζῆν ἢ λογισμῷ χρῆσθαι πρὸς ἅπαντα; *ibid.*, 6.10: εἴτα <ταῦτα> [sc. ἃ περὶ τοῦ θυμοῦ λελεκεται μέχρι τοῦ δεῦρο] καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν αὐτὸν ἀναμνησκείν, ἀμεινον μὲν εἰ πολλάκις, εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἀλλὰ πάντως γε κατὰ τὴν ἔω, πρὶν ἄρχεσθαι τῶν πράξεων, εἰς ἐσπέραν δέ, πρὶν ἀναπαύσεσθαι μελλείν. ἐγὼ δὴπου καὶ ταύτας δὴ τὰς φερομένας ὡς Πυθαγόρου παραινέσεις εἴθισμαι δις τῆς ἡμέρας ἀναγινώσκειν μὲν τὰ πρώτα, λέγειν δ' ἀπὸ στόματος ὕστερον; Marcus Aurelius 2.1.1, 5.1.1. See also Hadot, *Exercices spirituels*, 22.

²⁵⁶ See Chadwick, "Gewissen," 1086–87.

²⁵⁷ See Anton Baumstark, "Abendgebet," *RAC* 1 (1950) 9–12; Emmanuel von Severus, "Gebet I," *RAC* 8 (1972) 1134–1258, esp. 1162.

²⁵⁸ Following the reading of M (as Diehl-Young does). The obvious objection to this reading is the glaring hiatus; V's reading (μηδὲν ὧν) avoids the hiatus, but does not scan. The reading adopted by Mullach, Nauck, van der Horst, and Farina (μηδὲν τῶν) answers to both objections, but is supported by a single late manuscript, U.

²⁵⁹ Alternatively, 'let yourself be taught'; cf. van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 150.

tion before action (GV 27), followed by a confirmatory γνώμη (GV 28). A criterion for action is given next: do only what will not grieve you (GV 29). This in turn is followed by two precepts, first a negative, and then a positive one, concerning knowledge as prerequisite for action, with a promise of a resulting happy life (GV 30-31).

Deliberation falls within the province of φρόνησις; it is sometimes indicated as a virtue in its own right (εὐβουλία), though still subordinate to φρόνησις.²⁶⁰ This is also the virtue Hierocles refers to in his discussion of this passage (in CA 14). The principle of predeliberation is characteristic of wisdom literature in general²⁶¹ and its practice formed an integral part of the rationalization of one's life preached by most Hellenistic philosophers.²⁶² The ultimate goal was a quiet life, a life devoid of pain and disturbance, a life characterized by ἀταραξία.²⁶³ For this reason, the 'most enjoyable life' (GV 31) is here also defined negatively: it is a life unmarred by self-afflicted grief (cf. GV 29b, 34c, 39b).²⁶⁴

To avoid pain and folly (μωρά, GV 27), one needs insight into the nature and potential consequences of one's actions, even if these lie in the not immediate future (μετέπειτ', GV 29); this is

²⁶⁰ Cf. Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 6.5. An analysis of *deliberation* (βουλευέσθαι) is to be found in *ibid.*, 3.3. For εὐβουλία as species of φρόνησις, cf. *ibid.*, 6.7.6, 6.9.2-7; SVF 3.64.21. An excellent discussion of the relation between φρόνησις and deliberation in Aristotle is given by Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Aristotle's Theory of Moral Insight* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), chap. 7: "Moral Insight and Deliberation."

²⁶¹ Cf. Cleobulus ap. Diogenes Laertius 1.92: καὶ ὅταν τις ἐξήτῃ τῆς οἰκίας, ζητείτω πρότερον τί μέλλει πράσσειν· καὶ ὅταν εἰσέλθῃ πάλιν, ζητείτω τί ἔπραξε; Democritus frg. 66 DK: προβουλευέσθαι κρείσσον πρὸ τῶν πράξεων ἢ μετανοεῖν (= "Ἀριστον καὶ πρῶτον μάθημα 104); Menander *Sent.* 111: βουλὴν ἅπαντος πράγματος προλάμβανε; Clitarchus 16: σκέπτοντο πρὸ τοῦ πράττειν καὶ ἃ πράττει ἐξέταξε, ἵνα μὴδὲν ποιῇ ὃ μὴ δεῖ (cf. also Sextus *Sent.* 93); Pyth. *Sent.* 12: βουλευσάμενος πολλὰ ἦκε ἐπὶ τὸ λέγειν ἢ πράττειν· οὐ γὰρ ἔξεις ἐξουσίαν ἀνακαλέσασθαι τὰ πραχθέντα ἢ λεχθέντα (cf. Clitarchus 128); LXX Sir 32:19: ἄνευ βουλῆς μὴθὲν ποιήσης καὶ ἐν τῷ ποιῆσαί σε μὴ μεταμελοῦ (cf. also 37:16); *Instruction of Ankhsheshonqy* 8.4: "Do not do a thing that you have not first examined" (trans. Miriam Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context: A Study of Demotic Instructions* [OBO 52; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983] 66-92; quotation from p. 73). Cf. also the two parables in Luke 14:28-33.

²⁶² Cf., e.g., Epictetus *Ench.* 29; also the authors cited in n. 255 above. See further Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 148-49; Hadot, "Spiritual Guide," 454.

²⁶³ See on this Paul Wilpert, "Ataraxie," *RAC* 1 (1950) 844-54, esp. 844: "Worin besteht das Glück? Die griech. Frühzeit dachte vor allem an die äußeren Güter, deren Inbegriff der ὄλβος ist. Aber bald erkannte man, daß die Wurzeln des Glücks in der eigenen Seele liegen. Worin anders dürfen wir dann das Glück suchen als in einem Zustand gleichmäßiger, unerschütterlicher Ruhe? Seit Demokrit ist die griech. Ethik darin einig."

²⁶⁴ Cf. also Vit. *Aesop.* (W) 110, p. 102.12 Perry: πράσσε τὰ μὴ λυποῦντά σε.

only acquired through a process of learning (GV 30),²⁶⁵ not only from one's own mistakes and those of others,²⁶⁶ but also from teachings such as the *Golden Verses*.²⁶⁷ The consequences of unpremeditated actions (ἀνόητα, GV 28), on the other hand, are beyond our control; such actions are therefore the work of a fool (cf. also GV 54–60).

GV 32–39

οὐ δ' ὑγιείας τῆς περὶ σῶμ' ἀμέλειαν ἔχειν χρή,
ἀλλὰ ποτοῦ τε μέτρον καὶ σίτου γυμνασίων τε
ποιεῖσθαι. μέτρον δὲ λέγω τόδ', ὃ μὴ σ' ἀνιήσει.
εἰθίζου δὲ δίαιταν ἔχειν καθάρειον ἄθρυπτον
καὶ πεφύλαξο τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν, ὅποσα φθόνον ἴσχει.
μὴ δαπανᾶν παρὰ καιρὸν ὅποια καλῶν ἀδαήμων
μῆδ' ἀνελεύθερος ἴσθι. μέτρον δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστον.
πρῶσσε δὲ ταῦθ', ἃ σε μὴ βλάψει, λόγισαι δὲ πρὸ ἔργου.

You should not be careless about your physical health,
but you should practice due measure in drinking, eating, and physical
exercises. By due measure I mean that which will not distress you.
Become accustomed to have a pure²⁶⁸ way of life, not an enervated one,
and guard against doing the kind of thing that incurs envy.
Do not spend money at the wrong time like someone ignorant of what
is good,
nor be tight-fisted. Due measure is in everything the best.
Do that which will not harm you, and take thought before the deed.

While the previous verses stated the principle of *deliberation* in order to avoid distressing consequences, GV 32–38 give various precepts concerning how to *live* in such a manner that one evades negative results. Because they emphasize the need for moderation, these precepts are more concerned with *σωφροσύνη*. The subsection may be divided into three clusters: the first (GV 32–34) has to

²⁶⁵ The process is emphasized by the use of a *present* imperative. The predominance of present imperatives in the *Golden Verses* is remarkable (35 out of a total of 42, including imperatival infinitives and prohibitory subjunctives). For “the outstanding importance which the Greeks ascribed to knowledge in any situation where action was required” see Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 33.

²⁶⁶ Cf. Iamblichus VP 49: νομίζειν δὲ κράτιστον μὲν εἶναι τὸν καθ' αὐτὸν δυνάμενον προῦδεῖν τὸ συμφέρον, δεύτερον δὲ τὸν ἐκ τῶν τοῖς ἄλλοις συμβεβηκότων κατανοοῦντα τὰ λυσιτελοῦν, χερίστον δὲ τὸν ἀναμένοντα διὰ τοῦ κακῶς παθεῖν αἰσθῆσθαι τὸ βέλτιον. A similar schema is to be found in Hesiod *Op.* 293–97 (quoted p. 152 above). Cf. also *Vit. Aesop.* (W) 110, p. 102.7–8 Perry: αἰεὶ θελε χρήσιμα προσμανθάνειν.

²⁶⁷ Thus Hierocles in CA 15.3.

²⁶⁸ Or, ‘refined’; see LSJ, s.v. καθάρειας. See the discussion below.

do with moderation and physical health, the second (GV 35–36) with a sober life-style, and the third (GV 37–38) with spending money. Finally, the whole section on deeds and consequences (GV 27–39) is closed by means of two summary commands which again stress the need for deliberation (GV 39).

32–34 We first find a negative precept (GV 32), then a positive one (GV 33–34a), followed by an explanation (GV 34b). The two precepts should not be considered separately; they constitute a *correctio* of the form *non x, sed y*.²⁶⁹ ‘Taking care of your physical health’ is therefore given a very specific content: “Practice due measure.”²⁷⁰

Exhortations to be moderate in eating and drinking are very common in moralistic writings from Antiquity.²⁷¹ Moderation in these matters belongs to the virtue of *σωφροσύνη*.²⁷² One reason for avoiding immoderate enjoyment of food and drink, is because it can be detrimental to one’s health.²⁷³ ‘Due measure’ (*μέτρον*) is consequently defined negatively as “that which will not distress you.”²⁷⁴ ‘Health’ (*ὑγίεια*) could of course also be understood as ‘spiritual health,’²⁷⁵ in the sense that immoderation inhibits one’s spiritual advancement; it is therefore explicitly qualified as ‘bodily

²⁶⁹ See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, § 785.

²⁷⁰ Thus also Proclus Arab. in CA f. 104r: “Pythagoras exhorts us to *give attention to the health of our bodies, by being moderate in our consumption of food and drink, as well as in taking exercise*” (trans. Linley, *Proclus’ Commentary*, 65). Plutarch’s treatise *De tuenda sanitate praecepta* may be compared to great advantage; see also the commentary by Morton Smith, “*De Tuenda Sanitate Praecepta* (Moralia 122B–137E),” in *Plutarch’s Ethical Writings and Early Christianity* (ed. Hans Dieter Betz; SCHNT 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 32–50. For the expression ‘practice due measure,’ cf. Theognis 475: *μέτρον γὰρ ἔχω μελιτῆδος οἴνου*; 614: *οἱ δ’ ἀγαθοὶ πάντων μέτρον ἴσασιν ἔχειν*; Pindar *Pyth.* 2.34: *χρὴ δὲ κατ’ αὐτὸν αἰεὶ παντὸς ὄραν μέτρον*; *Nem.* 11.47: *χρὴ μέτρον θηρευέμεν*; *Isthm.* 6.71: *μέτρα μὲν γνώμα διώκων, μέτρα δὲ καὶ κατέχων*. See further van der Horst, *Vers d’or*, 20–21; West, *Hesiod: Works and Days*, 326.

²⁷¹ Cf., e.g., Theognis 479–80, 497–502; Democritus frgs. 235, 191 DK; Pseudo-Phocylides 68–69; *Gnom. Epict.* 17; Plutarch *De sanit. praec.*, passim. See in general Adolf Lumpe, “Essen,” *RAC* 6 (1966) 612–35, esp. 615–17, 624, 629–31 (on “Maß im Essen”); Rudolf Arbesmann, “Gefräßigkeit,” *RAC* 9 (1976) 345–90, esp. 361–63.

²⁷² Cf. Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 3.10–12, esp. 3.10.9, 3.11.8.

²⁷³ Cf. Democritus frgs. 234–35 DK; Diodorus 10.7.1; Sir 31:19–21, 37:27–31; Philo *Sobr.* 2. According to Arbesmann, the “hygienische Motive” was often advanced as reason for avoiding gluttony (“Gefräßigkeit,” passim).

²⁷⁴ Cf. also Democritus frg. 233 DK: *εἴ τις ὑπερβάλλοι τὸ μέτριον, τὰ ἐπιτερπέστατα ἀτερπέστατα αὖν γίγνεται*.

²⁷⁵ The metaphorical use of the term was common in Antiquity; see Fridolf Kudlien, “Gesundheit,” *RAC* 10 (1978) 902–45, as well as the commentary on GV 19 above.

health' (ὕγιείας τῆς περὶ σῶμ'). The author is here concerned with the effect of immoderation on one's physical well-being in the first place, and only indirectly with its spiritual implications.²⁷⁶

The topic of moderation as regards physical exercises is well illuminated by a precept from Pseudo-Isocrates *Ad Demonicum*:

ἄσκει τῶν περὶ τὸ σῶμα γυμνασίων μὴ τὰ πρὸς τὴν ῥώμην, ἀλλὰ τὰ πρὸς τὴν ὑγίειαν· τούτου δ' ἂν ἐπιτύχοις, εἰ λήγεις τῶν πόνων ἐπι πονεῖν δυνάμενος.

Train your body, not by exercises which conduce to strength, but by those which conduce to health. In this you will succeed if you cease your exertions while you still have energy to exert yourself. (*Demonic*. 14; trans. George Norlin, LCL)

Moderate exercises are commended as conducive to physical well-being,²⁷⁷ but exercising excessively (as, e.g., in the case of athletes) is criticized by physicians such as Galen on the grounds that it has no practical value.²⁷⁸

According to Aristoxenus, Pythagoreans emphasized the relation between health and moderation. Discussing their attitude to the healing art (ιατρική), he states that they "first tried to discover indications of the due proportions of labor, food, and rest" (πειρᾶσθαι πρῶτον μὲν καταμανθάνειν σημεῖα συμμετρίας πόνων τε καὶ σίτων καὶ ἀναπαύσεως).²⁷⁹ In general, Pythagoreans came out

²⁷⁶ According to a doxographical note in Lucian *Pro lapsu* 5, Pythagoras used the greeting ὑγιαίνειν ("Health to you") instead of the more usual χαίρειν or εὖ πράττειν, and that all Pythagoreans used this form in their letters, since health "encompasses all human goods." Their secret symbol, the Pentagram, was also called ὑγεία, while some, including Philolaus, called the *tetraktys* (see below on GV 47) "the Beginning of Health." It is clear, however, that 'health' in GV 32 has its usual meaning.

²⁷⁷ Cf. [Plato] *Amatores* 134a-c, esp. 134c: ὁμολογῶ μὴ τὰ πολλὰ ἀλλὰ τὰ μέτρια γυμνάσια τὴν εὐεξίαν ἐμποιεῖν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

²⁷⁸ See Jüthner, "Gymnastik," PW 7 (1912) 2030-85, esp. 2068-69. According to a testimony in Iamblichus *VP* 97, however, Pythagoreans specifically chose exercises that were suited for strengthening the body. For philosophers' criticism of excessive training and hardships, cf., e.g., Seneca *Ep.* 108.16; Lucian *Nigr.* 26-28. Cf. on this topic also 1 Tim 4:8, with the commentary by C. Spicq (*Saint Paul: Les épîtres pastorales* [Études bibliques; 2 vols.; 4th ed.; Paris: Gabalda, 1969] 1.506-8).

²⁷⁹ Aristoxenus ap. Iamblichus *VP* 163 = DK 58D1. The reading πόνων is found in F and followed by Michael von Albrecht (*Iamblichos: Pythagoras - Legende, Lehre, Lebensgestaltung* [Bibliothek der alten Welt; Zurich: Artemis, 1963] 166) and by Burkert (in his review of von Albrecht, *Gnomon* 37 [1965] 25); ποτῶν is preferred by Ludwig Deubner (*Iamblichus de vita Pythagorica liber* [rev. Udalricus Klein; BT; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1975] 92). For the problem of the due proportion of exercise to food, cf. Hippocrates *Περὶ διαίτης* (*De victu*) 1.2: εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν εὐρετὸν ἐπὶ τούτοις πρὸς ἐκάστην φύσιν σίτου μέτρον καὶ πόνων ἀριθμὸς σύμμετρος μὴ ἔχων ὑπερβολὴν μήτε ἐπὶ τὸ πλεόν μήτε ἐπὶ τὸ ἐλαττοον,

on the Academic-Peripatetic side in deciding for moderation of the passions, *metriopatheia*, as opposed to the Stoic position of *apatheia*.²⁸⁰

35–36 GV 35–36 are of a more general nature, and provide a link between GV 32–34 and GV 37–38. Both GV 32–34 and 37–38 are concerned with external goods (health and money); in both cases practicing due measure (*μέτρον*) is advised. In GV 35–36, on the other hand, the author refers to a life-style in general; he does not use the principle of due measure here, but rather that of avoiding envy (*φθόρος*). GV 32–38 therefore have a ring structure: A (specific: health; *μέτρον*), B (general: life-style; *φθόρος*), A' (specific: money; *μέτρον*).²⁸¹

The relation between the asyndetic pair *καθάρειον ἄθρυπτον* can be either synonymous (*asyndeton additivum*) or adversative (*asyndeton adversativum*);²⁸² in the former case the meaning would be 'pure, that is, not enervated,' while in the latter case it would mean 'refined, but not enervated.' The latter is the interpretation attached to this phrase by Hierocles (*in CA 17.6*). Many Hellenistic philosophers were skeptical about an overemphasis on cleanliness and refinement, which was seen as pandering to the body's needs. Some, the Cynics par excellence, even took pride in going about unwashed and unkempt. The Pythagorists ridiculed in Middle Comedy also apparently belonged to this group.²⁸³ Within

εὔρητο ἂν ἡ ὑγείη τοῖσιν ἀνθρώποισιν ἀκριβῶς ("If it were really possible to find for the nature of each man a correct proportion of food to exercise, without inaccuracy of excess or of defect, this would be a right way to his health"; trans. Leonid J. Zhmud', "'All is number'? 'Basic Doctrine' of Pythagoreanism Reconsidered," *Phronesis* 34 [1989] 291).

²⁸⁰ Cf. Iamblichus VP 131: ἀσκήσαι δὲ φασιν αὐτὸν (sc. Pythagoras) καὶ τὰς μετριοπαθείας καὶ τὰς μεσότητας; Archytas *De educ.*, p. 41.16–18 Thesleff. On the position of the latter and other Hellenistic Pythagorica, see Paul Moraux, *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen von Andronikos bis Alexander von Aphrodisias 2: Der Aristotelismus im I. und II. Jh. n. Chr.* (Peripatoi 6; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984) 662–66. Cf. further Porphyry VP 22 = Iamblichus VP 34 = Jerome c. *Rufin.* 3.39.36–39: ἀπόφθεγμα· φυγαδευτέον πάση μηχανῇ καὶ περικοπτέον πυρὶ καὶ σιδήρῳ καὶ μηχαναῖς παντοίοις ἀπὸ μὲν σώματος νόσον, ἀπὸ δὲ ψυχῆς ἀμαθίαν, κοιλίας δὲ πολυτέλειαν, πόλεως δὲ στάσιν, οἴκου δὲ διχοφροσύνην, ὁμοῦ δὲ πάντων ἀμετρίαν; cf. also Iamblichus VP 187.

²⁸¹ A slightly different composition is suggested by van der Horst: "[Le vers 35] résume les vers 32 à 34.... Le vers 36 est le résumé des deux vers qui le suivent; il faut donc l'en séparer par un point en haut" (*Vers d'or*, 21).

²⁸² See Lausberg, *Elemente*, § 328.2.

²⁸³ The texts are collected in DK 58E. For a brief discussion, with all the relevant references, see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 198–201. Cf. also van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 20.

the present context with its emphasis on moderation, however, the former interpretation seems preferable. Excess leads to an effeminate and pampered life style; the opposite is described as 'pure,' that is, sober.²⁸⁴ Pythagoras is said to have exhorted his disciples "to keep away and refrain from luxuriousness by all means, and to *accustom themselves* from childhood to a *sober, manly way of life*" (ἐκ παντὸς εἶργειν τε καὶ ἀπωθεῖσθαι τὴν τρυφὴν καὶ συν-εθίζεσθαι ἀπὸ γενετῆς σώφρονί τε καὶ ἀνδρικῶ βίῳ; Iamblichus VP 171 = 223).

The second precept (GV 36) also implies avoidance of excess. 'Things which entail envy' are precisely actions in which the limits of common sense and due measure are exceeded. According to a saying of Cato the Elder, people do not envy other people themselves, but their circumstances. If we therefore avoid ostentation, we will also not incur envy: "Those who use their good fortune reasonably and moderately are least envied; for people envy not us but our surroundings" (ἥκιστα δὲ φθονεῖσθαι τοὺς τῇ τύχῃ χρωμένους ἐπεικῶς καὶ μετρίως· οὐ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀλλὰ τοῖς περὶ ἡμᾶς φθονοῦσι).²⁸⁵ Pythagoras also warned against arousing envy: One should take part in athletics, but without winning, because in this manner one would escape envy. One should in general flee from love of fame and honor, for these two especially excite envy.²⁸⁶

37–38 The third cluster contains two precepts concerning moderation regarding money matters,²⁸⁷ followed by a gnomic statement about due measure. The first precept is about ill-timed, extrava-

²⁸⁴ Both καθάρειος and ἄθρυπτος are often used to describe a sober way of life; cf., e.g., Plutarch *Consol. ad uxor.* 609c, *Reg. et imper. apophth.* 180e; Diodorus 5.33. καθάρειος can also mean 'refined,' however; cf. LSJ, s.v. (who incorrectly, in my view, give our present verse as an example for this meaning); Athenaeus 3.74d. The adverb can mean 'frugally'; cf. μὴ πολυτελῶς, ἀλλὰ καθαρείως (Eubulus frg. 110.1; Ephippus frg. 15.3; Nicostratus frg. 6.2; cited by LSJ, s.v. καθαρείως). This meaning would fit our context perfectly.

²⁸⁵ Ap. Plutarch *Reg. et imper. apophth.* 199a = Stobaeus 3.38.51.

²⁸⁶ Cf. Porphyry VP 15, 32. On the whole, ancient authors focus their criticism on envy as a vice; we find comparatively few statements on the necessity for avoiding envy; cf., e.g., Pindar *Isthm.* 7.39–48. Cf. also Gal 5:26 with the commentary by Betz (*Galatians*, 294–95). For envy as a vice, cf. Aristotle *Rh.* 2.10; more references in Spicq, *Lexicographie* 2.919–21, s.v. φθόνος. See in general also Ernst Milobenski, *Der Neid in der griechischen Philosophie* (Klassisch-philologische Studien 29; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1964).

²⁸⁷ See on this topic in general Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 2.384; Dover, *Popular Morality*, 175–80; Bogaert, "Geld (Geldwirtschaft)," 823–31.

gant spending.²⁸⁸ A man who spends money ostentatiously and *at the wrong time* (παρὰ καιρόν) reveals a want of taste (καλῶν ἀδαήμων; see below). According to Aristotle, inopportuneness is characteristic of vulgar or tasteless extravagance. The problem with vulgar spending does not lie in the amount spent, but rather in the inappropriateness of the *manner* and *circumstances* of the expenditure. The opposite of vulgarity is magnificence.²⁸⁹ The author of the *Golden Verses* does not criticize spending as such, even if it entails large amounts, but rather spending which is not based on an insight into the καιρός.²⁹⁰ “Know the right moment” (καιρὸν γνῶθι) is a very old saying;²⁹¹ it had a particular significance for Pythagoreans.²⁹² As is the case here, καιρός is often associated with μέτρον, and sometimes even used as a synonym for it.²⁹³

The final phrase of GV 37, καλῶν ἀδαήμων, literally means

²⁸⁸ GV 37–38 are quoted in Stobaeus 3.15.7 under the heading περὶ ἀσωτίας. δαπανᾶν is to be taken as an imperativ infinitive, despite Delatte’s criticism (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 56). δαπανῶν, the reading of V, which van der Horst follows, would be a periphrastic participle coordinated with the adjective ἀνελεύθερος (μὴ δαπανῶν ... μὴδ’ ἀνελεύθερος ἴσθι), resulting in an overly forced construction.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 4.2.1–22, esp. 4.2.20 and 4.2.4.1122a30–33: τῆς τοιαύτης δ’ ἔξεως [sc. μεγαλοπρεπείας] ἡ μὲν ἄλλειψις μικροπρέπεια καλεῖται, ἡ δ’ ὑπερβολὴ βανανσία καὶ ἀπειροκαλία καὶ ὅσαι τοιαῦται, οὐχ ὑπερβάλλουσιν τῷ μεγέθει περὶ ὅ δεῖ, ἀλλ’ ἐν οἷς οὐ δεῖ καὶ ὥς οὐ δεῖ λαμπρυνόμεναι (“The deficiency of this state of character [sc. magnificence] is called niggardliness, the excess vulgarity, lack of taste, and the like, which do not go to excess in the amount spent on right objects, but by showy expenditure in the wrong circumstances and the wrong manner”; trans. W. D. Ross, *The Works of Aristotle* 9 [rev. J. O. Urmson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975]; emphasis added).

²⁹⁰ For ill-timed spending, cf. Chares frg. 2.1: δαπάνην ἄκαιρον μηδαμῶς προσέισο; *Sententiae Septem sapientum*, ap. *Anecdota Graeca* 1.143 Boissonade: χρόνου φείδου· δαπανώμενος γὰρ ἐφ’ ὅ μὴ δεῖ, ὀλίγος ἐστὶν ἐφ’ ὅ δεῖ; *Did.* 1.6: ἰδρωσάτω ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη σου εἰς τὰς χεῖράς σου, μέχρις ἂν γνῶς, τίτι δῶς. For παρὰ καιρόν, cf. also Theognis 199; Phocylides frg. 6 Diehl.; Pseudo-Phocylides 82 (with the commentary by van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 170). Cf. also the emphasis on καιρός in 1 Cor 4:5; Eph 5:16; Col 4:5; also Rom 13:11.

²⁹¹ Cf. Demetrius of Phalerum *Septem sapientum apophthegmata* ap. Stobaeus 3.1.172, p. 120.2; Sosiades *Septem sapientum praecepta* ap. Stobaeus 3.1.173, p. 125.7. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 127.8; *Praecepta Delphica* (= *SLG* 3.1268) 2.21: καιρὸν προσδέχου; *Sententiae septem sapientum* ap. *Anecdota Graeca* 1.142 Boissonade: καιρὸν πρόσμνε.

²⁹² Cf. Iamblichus *VP* 49, 180–82, with the commentary by de Vogel, *Pythagoras*, 113–22.

²⁹³ Cf. esp. Hesiod *Op.* 694: μέτρα φυλάσσεσθαι· καιρὸς δ’ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστος. More references for the association of these two terms may be found in West, *Hesiod: Works and Days*, 326. See further the discussion and references in Édouard des Places, *La religion grecque: Dieux, cultes, rites et sentiment religieux dans la Grèce antique* (Paris: Picard, 1969) 345–47. To these we may add Hippocrates *De victu* 7 = DK 22C1; Democritus frg. 235 DK.

'ignorant of good things.' This phrase is most probably a paraphrase of the adjective ἀπειρόκαλος,²⁹⁴ which means 'tasteless,' 'vulgar.'²⁹⁵ Ignorance and lack of taste in the rich is a commonplace in moralistic writings.²⁹⁶ Theognis stresses how difficult it is for a fool to act with moderation when he enjoys prosperity: πολλούς τοι κόρος ἄνδρας ἀπώλεσεν ἀφραΐνοντας / γνῶναι γὰρ χαλεπὸν μέτρον ὅτ' ἐσθλὰ παρῇ ("Surfeit has destroyed many foolish men indeed, / for it is difficult to know moderation when good things are at hand"; Theognis 693–94).

The second precept (GV 38a) warns against the other extreme, namely, stinginess. Miserly behavior is often a target for criticism in gnomic literature.²⁹⁷ According to Aristotle, the mean between prodigality (ἄσωτία) and meanness (ἀνελευθερία) consists in liberality (ἐλευθεριότης) (*Eth. Nic.* 2.7.4, 4.1). Pythagoreans were well-known for their liberal and magnanimous spending when the occasion demanded, usually in aid of other Pythagoreans in need.²⁹⁸ According to Pythagoras it was possible to ensure 'liberal expenditures' (τὰ ἐλευθέρια δαπανήματα) if one practiced economy (Iamblichus VP 169).

The final γνώμη (GV 38b) is actually made up out of two famous sayings, namely, μέτρον ἄριστον²⁹⁹ and καιρὸς δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστος.³⁰⁰ It summarizes everything said in GV 32–38, and en-

²⁹⁴ Cf. Hierocles in CA 17.10, where the topic is described as ἀπειροκαλία. Cf. also the Stobaeus MSS which have ἀπειροκάλως ἐν ἡμῶν instead of ὁποῖα καλῶν ἀδαήμων in their quotation of this passage (Stobaeus 3.15.7). Hense suggests that ἀπειρόκαλος was meant as a gloss for ἀδαήμων καλῶν (Stobaeus, 3.477–78n). Cf. finally Paul Shorey, review of *Les vers d'or pythagoriciens*, by P. C. van der Horst, *CPh* 28 (1933) 66–67: "The phrase [καλῶν ἀδαήμων] is a periphrasis for ἀπειρόκαλος."

²⁹⁵ See LSJ, s.vv. ἀπειρόκαλος, ἀπειροκαλία, who refer to Plato *Resp.* 403c, 405b; Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 1107b19 ("ἀπειροκαλία περὶ χρήματα, vulgar extravagance").

²⁹⁶ For references, consult Gerhard, *Phoinix von Kolophon*, 122.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 57–62.

²⁹⁸ See the anecdotes in Diodorus 10.3.5–10.4.1; Iamblichus VP 237–39.

²⁹⁹ This maxim is usually ascribed to Cleobulus, one of the Seven Sages (DK 10.3ā1). Cf. further E. L. von Leutsch and F. G. Schneidewin, eds., *Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum* (2 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1839–51) 2.80–82. It is often quoted, sometimes with variations; cf. Hesiod *Op.* 694; Theognis 335, 614; Phocylides frg. 12 Diehl; Pseudo-Phocylides 14, 36, 98. See also the commentaries of West (*Hesiod: Works and Days*, 326) and van der Horst (*Pseudo-Phocylides*, 138) for more references. For secondary literature, see TWNT 10.2, s.v. μέτρον. The maxim is quoted in Galen *Affect. dig-not.* 3.1, a text which, as I have suggested, displays a knowledge of the *Golden Verses*, but it is impossible to assert with confidence that Galen is here thinking of GV 38b.

³⁰⁰ Cf. Hesiod *Op.* 694b = Theognis 401; also Pindar *Ol.* 13.48; Bacchylides 14.16–18 (more references in West, *Hesiod: Works and Days*, 326). GV 38b is quoted in the Pseudo-pythagorean Letter of Theano to Callisto, but without attribution (*Ep. Pyth.* 7.5, p. 178.44–

capsulates like no other the virtue of σωφροσύνη, “die spezifisch hellenische Tugend.”³⁰¹

39 GV 27–39 are concluded by two summary commands that recapitulate the ideas of deliberation and avoidance of harmful consequences. *πράσσε δὲ ταῦθ’*, ἅ σε μὴ βλάψει is a direct paraphrase of GV 29,³⁰² but it also has connections with GV 26, 27b, 30a, 34b, and 36. *λόγισαι δὲ πρὸ ἔργου* is in turn a repetition of GV 27a.³⁰³

4.2 Reflection and Self-Examination (GV 40–44)

GV 40–44 are without doubt the most celebrated part of the *Golden Verses*. They are quoted as a whole, or in part, at least fifteen times (not counting the ancient commentaries) by ancient authors such as Plutarch, Epictetus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Porphyry, Diogenes Laertius, Ausonius, and Themistius, and there are probable allusions to them in several more texts.³⁰⁴ This popularity may perhaps be explained by the fact that these verses express the psychagogic function of the *Golden Verses in nuce*, and therefore represent the poem as a whole.

Self-examination forms in many respects the culmination of the psychagogic process, since the individual is here directly confronted with him- or herself, with his or her own shortcomings or spiritual potential. It is, in any case, the *sine qua non* for any progress in virtue.³⁰⁵ It is quite probable that the practice originated with the Pythagoreans, although it was also practiced by Epicureans and Stoics, as well as by more eclectic philosophers.³⁰⁶ If

45 Städele). According to Städele, this maxim is “wie im Carmen aureum 38, wahrscheinlich aus einer Gnomensammlung übernommen” (*Briefe des Pythagoras*, 331). It may just as plausibly be a quotation from the *Golden Verses*. Macrobius quotes it among others as an apothegm of Homer (*Saturnalia* 5.16.6); see on this Nauck, “De aureo carmine,” 222–23.

³⁰¹ Wilamowitz, *Glaube der Hellenen* 2.121.

³⁰² Cf. also *Vit. Aesop.* (W) 110, p. 102.12 Perry: *πράσσε τὰ μὴ λυποῦντά σε*.

³⁰³ The variation between the present tense at the beginning of a passage (*βουλεύου*) and the aorist at the end (*λόγισαι*) is a function of the difference in aspect between these two tenses; cf. also Matt 6:25 (*μὴ μεριμνᾶτε*), 31 (*μὴ μεριμνήσητε*).

³⁰⁴ See the list of testimonia on pp. 13–14 above.

³⁰⁵ Cf. Epicurus ap. Seneca *Ep.* 28.9 (= frg. 522 Usener): *Initium est salutis notitia peccati* (“Awareness of an error is the beginning of salvation”).

³⁰⁶ See on this practice Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 2.394–95; Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 180–88; Umberto Moricca, “L’esame di coscienza e la storia d’un precetto pitagorico,” *Il mondo classico* 10 (1940) 221–44; Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même* 1.50–53; I. Hadot, *Tradition der Seelenleitung*, 66–71; idem, “Spiritual Guide,” 453–54; Chadwick, “Gewissen,” 1056–57; P. Hadot, *Exercices spirituels*, 22–23. According to Mondolfo, this

the *Golden Verses* is to be dated as early as I suggested in chapter 5, it would be one of the earliest witnesses to this practice.

Self-examination should not overhastily be identified with the examination of the conscience. In the case of the latter the conscience is examined for feelings of guilt as an indication of transgressions, neglect, and so on, while the practice as outlined here is a more 'objective' consideration of deeds done.³⁰⁷ On the other hand, there were some indications earlier in the poem that the author also reckons with the effects of a guilty conscience (*GV* 11–12, 29, 34). Be that as it may, the practice of self-examination as described here clearly is a precursor of the early Christian practices of self-examination and confession. A major difference between the two, however, is that the Pythagorean practice is basically a monologue, or, perhaps better, an internal dialogue, while the Christian confession always takes place in the presence of God.³⁰⁸

GV 40–44

μὴ δ' ὕπνον μαλακοῖσιν ἐπ' ὄμμασι προσδέξασθαι,
 πρὶν τῶν ἡμερινῶν ἔργων τρὶς ἑκάστον ἐπελθεῖν·
 “πῇ παρέβην; τί δ' ἔρεξα; τί μοι δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη;
 ἀρξάμενος δ' ἀπὸ πρώτου ἐπέξιθι καὶ μετέπειτα
 δειλὰ μὲν ἐκπρήξας ἐπιπλήσσο, χρηστὰ δὲ τέρπευ.

Do not welcome sleep upon your soft eyes
 before you have reviewed each of the day's deeds three times:
 “Where have I transgressed? What have I accomplished? What duty
 have I neglected?”
 Beginning from the first one go through them in detail, and then,
 if you have brought about worthless things, reprimand yourself, but if
 you have achieved good things, be glad.

The practice of self-criticism entails three basic steps, namely, (a)

practice was one of the most important Pythagorean contributions to the history of ethics (in Zeller, *Filosofia dei greci* 1.2.578–80).

³⁰⁷ The development of the conscience as an internal faculty capable of experiencing guilt and remorse may have occurred at a fairly late stage; see Zucker, *Syneidesis-Conscientia*, 26; Chadwick, “Gewissen”; Peter W. Schönlein, “Zur Entstehung eines Gewissensbegriffes bei Griechen und Römern,” *RhM* n.s. 112 (1969) 289–305; Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 80–82 (on Paul), 96–98 (on Philo). The *locus classicus* for a description of a guilty conscience is Lucretius 3.1018–22; see Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 209–10.

³⁰⁸ See Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 188.

recollection of everything done during the day (GV 41, 43), (b) evaluation and classification of the deeds into one of three categories (transgression, accomplishment, or neglect; GV 42), and (c) self-blame and self-praise (GV 44).

40 Just before going to sleep, that is, at the very end of one's day, is of course the most practical time to review all the actions of the day.³⁰⁹ But there is more involved in the choice of time than mere practicalities. One of the functions of self-criticism is to recompose one's spirit by ridding it of anxieties and feelings of guilt. Only a spirit thus recomposed would be able to 'welcome soft sleep.'³¹⁰ Purifying the soul of passions at night formed a regular part of the Pythagorean routine.³¹¹ This was done in order that the soul not be troubled by bad dreams, which were seen as visitations of evil *daimones*, but would be able to receive good dreams (connected with good *daimones*) instead.³¹² Evening prayers in other traditions also had the purpose of ensuring peaceful dreams.³¹³

41 According to some witnesses the function of recollection was to practice one's memory,³¹⁴ which in turn played an important role in Pythagorean eschatological doctrines.

Empedocles (fr. 129) says that Pythagoras, when he put all his spiritual power to work, could survey ten and twenty generations. Surely this assumes that he recalled his earlier incarnations. The later tradition tells of a system of memory training among the Pythagoreans. They tried in the morning, or in the evening, to recall all the events of the past day, or even of the day before. In the world of the dead are the springs of Lethe and of Mnemosyne, and the initiate is warned of the former and

³⁰⁹ There are, however, some witnesses that locate the time of review in the morning, or at fixed points during the day; cf. Diodorus 10.5.1 (morning); Iamblichus VP 165 (morning); Diogenes Laertius 8.22 (whenever one enters one's house).

³¹⁰ The expression ὕπνον μαλακοῖσιν ἐπ' ὄμμασι is an *hypallage adiectivi* (Lausberg, *Handbuch*, § 685.2) for ὕπνον μαλακὸν ἐπ' ὄμμασι; cf. the reworking of this passage in Ausonius 363.14: *in dulcem ... somnum*. Cf. also on the quality of sleep that follows such a self-examination Seneca *Dial.* 5.36.2: *Qualis ille somnus post recognitionem sui sequitur, quam tranquillius, quam altius ac liber, cum aut laudatus est animus aut admonitus et speculator sui censorque secretus cognovit de moribus suis!*

³¹¹ See Iamblichus VP 65; Plutarch *De Is. et Os.* 384a.

³¹² Cf. on this Boyancé, *Culte des Muses*, 109–12.

³¹³ See Baumstark, "Abendgebet," 10, 12.

³¹⁴ Cicero *Sen.* 38; Diodorus 10.5.1; Iamblichus VP 165, 256; cf. also Diogenes Laertius 8.23. See on this Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 213–15; Willy Theiler, "Erinnerung," *RAC* 6 (1966) 43–54, esp. 50–51 ("Übung"); Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même* 1.51.

directed toward the latter. So the attractive conjecture has been made that the original goal of Pythagorean exercises in concentration was to enhance the strength of the soul so that, following the example of Pythagoras, it may avoid the spring of Lethe. Perhaps it was also customary practice in the mysteries to awaken in the initiate a 'memory' of his divine descent.³¹⁵

In this context, however, the practice primarily has a moral function. The two functions need not be unrelated;³¹⁶ by sharpening one's faculty to remember deeds clearly, one also heightens one's consciousness of the circumstances, causes, and effects of deeds. This better understanding of one's actions of course helps one to avoid the same mistakes in future. Self-examination in turn contributes to the purification of the soul, which is a prerequisite for recalling the earlier, prelapsarian state of the soul.³¹⁷

42 In order to evaluate one's actions, they have to be classified. The author uses a threefold classification: errors of commission, accomplishments,³¹⁸ and errors of omission.³¹⁹ It is no accident that negative actions feature more prominently in this classification than positive ones, since the ethics of the poem is more geared to prevention than to positive accomplishment. Neglecting one's duty is often considered as reprehensible as an outright error.³²⁰ It was a criticism leveled against Epicurus' doctrine of *λάθε βιώσας* in particular. The Pythagorean *akousma* "Don't sit on your ration of bread" (*μηδ' ἐπὶ χοίνικος καθέζεσθαι*) was interpreted in similar vein as "Don't be inactive."³²¹

Reviewing one's actions *three times* before going to bed (*GV*

³¹⁵ Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 213; for references see *ibid.*, nn. 19, 21.

³¹⁶ Apollonius ap. Iamblichus *VP* 256 attaches a twofold function to this practice, viz., moral self-examination as well as memory training (*ἅμα τῷ σκοπεῖσθαι καὶ τὴν μνήμην γυμναζομένους*). Diodorus 10.5.1 puts the memory training within a context of confession (*ἀνθωμολογήσαντο*).

³¹⁷ Cf. Diogenes Antonius ap. Porphyry *VP* 45: Πυθαγόρας ... ἐδείκνυνεν ὡς ἀθάνατος ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τοῖς κεκαθαρμένοις εἰς μνήμην τοῦ παλαιοῦ βίου ἀφικνεῖται.

³¹⁸ *ῥέζω* can also simply mean 'do,' but *GV* 44 seems to require a more positive meaning here.

³¹⁹ A threefold classification seems basic to the exercise; even witnesses who do not necessarily cite the *Golden Verses*, such as Cato and Seneca, retain this schema. Cf. Cato ap. Cicero *Sen.* 38: *quid ... dixerim audierim egerim*; Seneca *Dial.* 5.36.1: "*Quod hodie malum tuum sanasti? Cui vitio obstitisti? Qua parte melior es?*" Both authors are cited more fully on p. 39 above.

³²⁰ Cf. Marcus Aurelius 9.5: ἀδικεῖ πολλάκις ὁ μὴ ποιῶν τι, οὐ μόνον ὁ ποιῶν τι.

³²¹ Cf. Aristotle *frg.* 197 Rose = Porphyry *VP* 42; Plutarch *De liber. educ.* 17.12e. See also Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* 2.398.

40–41) could mean three times *during the day*, the last before turning in. This seems to have been the practice of Galen, but it is perhaps also implied by a testimony in Diogenes Laertius, according to which the three questions quoted in GV 42 have to be answered whenever one returns home.³²² What is meant here is more probably that one should put each of the three questions to everyone of one's actions before going to sleep.

43–44 Having examined every deed carefully, the final step is self-blame and self-praise. This, just like the previous step, was probably done aloud because of its greater psychological impact.³²³ One should not only pay attention to shortcomings, but also to the amount of progress made, as a way of positive self-reinforcement.³²⁴ In Plutarch's treatise *De profectionibus in virtute* he discusses the symptoms by which such a progress may be recognized.³²⁵ Seneca's way of self-examination also underscores the progress made, although he also does not hesitate to chastise himself in the strongest terms.³²⁶

With the practice of self-examination we come to the end of the moral section of the *Golden Verses*. At the same time it forms the climax of the psychagogy which is the purpose of the author.

5 Summary Commands to Practice Precepts (GV 45–49a)

Section II concludes with a few verses that emphasize the need to practice all the precepts constantly. They also contain a promise, affirmed by an oath, of how this labor will benefit the student.

³²² Galen *Affect. dignot.* 6.10; Diogenes Laertius 8.22. Cf. also Cleobulus ap. Diogenes Laertius 1.92: καὶ ὅταν τις ἐξῇ τῆς οἰκίας, ζητεῖτω πρότερον τί μέλλει πράσσειν καὶ ὅταν εἰσελθῇ πάλιν, ζητεῖτω τί ἔπραξε.

³²³ The terms (ἐπι)λέγειν and ἐπράδειν are often used in the testimonia; see also Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 180–81, 186–87, and, in general, 189–208 (“Selbstbeeinflussung durch verbale Akte”).

³²⁴ Cf. Clement of Alexandria *Paed.* 1.10.94, who cites GV 44 for the importance of praise in education.

³²⁵ See Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 182; William C. Grese, “*De Profectionibus in Virtute* (Moralia 75a–86a),” in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christianity* (ed. Hans Dieter Betz; SCHNT 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 11–31.

³²⁶ Cf. *Dial.* 5.36.1 (quoted n. 319 above), 5.36.4; *Ep.* 28.10.

GV 45–49a

ταῦτα πόνει, ταῦτ' ἐκμελέτα, τούτων χρη ἐρᾶν σε·
 ταῦτά σε τῆς θεῆς Ἀρετῆς εἰς ἵχνια θήσει
 ναὶ μὰ τὸν ἄμετέρῳ ψυχᾷ παραδόντα τετρακτύν,
 παγὰν ἀενάου φύσεως. ἀλλ' ἔρχευ ἐπ' ἔργον
 θεοῖσιν ἐπευξάμενος τελέσαι.

Work hard at this, meditate on this, you should passionately desire this; this will put you in the footsteps of divine Virtue, yes, by him who imparted to our soul the *tetraktys*, fount of ever-flowing nature. But to work! and pray to the gods to grant the fulfillment.³²⁷

45 Three commands are given in quick succession, constituting an *asyndetic enumeratio*, the effect of which is enhanced by the simultaneous use of *anaphora* (ταῦτα ... ταῦτ' ... τούτων).³²⁸ In keeping with the rhetorical rule of 'growing members,' the emphasis is on the final member (τούτων χρη ἐρᾶν σε): we not only find a syntactic expansion (χρη with accusative and infinitive instead of a simple imperative), but also a variation in case (τούτων instead of ταῦτα), that is, *polypotton*, and probably a semantic intensification as well.³²⁹ In the case of the first two commands ταῦτα could refer to the immediately preceding cluster on self-examination, but this is not possible in the final sentence. One does not 'desire' self-examination. It is also improbable that the antecedent of ταῦτα in GV 46 is limited to the practice of self-examination. The pronoun therefore refers more vaguely to everything taught in the section on virtue (GV 9–44).³³⁰ (Cf. also the use of ταῦτα in GV 9, 49.)

The three commands express different aspects of spiritual self-

³²⁷ For this meaning of τελέω see LSJ, s.v., I.2.

³²⁸ See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, §§ 629–30, 669–74. For very similar commands, cf. Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 1.1.25: ταῦτα ἔδει μελετᾶν τοὺς φιλοσοφοῦντας, ταῦτα καθ' ἡμέραν γράφειν, ἐν τούτοις γυμνάζεσθαι; also 2.1.29, 3.22.44; Phil 4:8–9: ... ταῦτα λογίζεσθε ... ταῦτα πράσσετε; 1 Tim 4:15–16: ταῦτα μελέτα, ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι, ἵνα σου ἡ προκοπὴ φανερὰ ᾖ πάσιν. ἔπεχε σεαυτῷ καὶ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, ἐπίμενε αὐτοῖς.

³²⁹ See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, § 451: "Der *modus per incrementa* [one of the rules of the *dispositio*] bezieht sich auf die steigernde Abfolge der Glieder eines Ganzen. Die steigernde Abfolge ist durch die Schlußstellung des stärksten Gliedes charakterisiert ('Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder').... Das Ganze und seine durch steigernde Abfolge unterschiedenen Glieder können dargestellt werden durch *res* oder *verba*. Die Stärke kann dargestellt werden durch (pathetische, semantische) Intensität oder durch Quantität (Umfang)." For *polypotton*, see *ibid.*, §§ 640–48.

³³⁰ Contra van der Horst, who wants to limit the pronoun to the precepts on self-examination (*Vers d'or*, 25).

training. *πονεῖν* implies physical effort and is related to *κρατεῖν* and *ἀσκεῖν* (“Tat-üben”), while *ἐκμελετᾶν* denotes a mental exercise (“das geistige Üben”).³³¹ *ἐρᾶν*, again, indicates an emotional involvement. The very term *φιλοσοφία* emphasizes the role love played in the process of acquiring wisdom.³³² Under the influence of Plato’s *Symposium* desire came to play an increasingly crucial role as a motivating force in Greek mysticism.³³³

46 The anaphora of the previous verse is resumed in GV 46, but with an important difference. In GV 45 ταῦτα is the object of all three commands, but here it is the subject, with ‘you’ as object: if you keep on practicing these teachings, they will start changing you. The aim of the teachings is to inculcate a state of perfection in virtue,³³⁴ which, in turn, is a prerequisite for approximating the deity. This doctrine is neatly summarized in the *Pythagorean Sentences*:

τιμήσεις μὲν ἄριστα τὸν θεόν, ὅταν τῷ θεῷ τὴν σαυτῆς διάνοιαν ὁμοιώσης. ἡ δὲ ὁμοίωσις ἔσται διὰ μόνης ἀρετῆς· μόνη γὰρ ἀρετὴ τὴν ἄνω ἔλκει καὶ πρὸς τὸ συγγενές.

You will honor God best whenever you make your thought like God. This likeness will be achieved through virtue alone, for virtue alone draws the soul upward and toward what is kindred. (*Pyth. Sent.* 102 = Porphyry *Marc.* 16; trans. Wicker, *Porphyry*, 59, 61)

As in the Platonic tradition, the desired state of perfection is

³³¹ See Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, 23. See also Hieronymus, “MELETH,” esp. pp. 4–15, 39–59; Betz, *Essays*, 7–15. Hierocles also interprets *ἐκμελέτα* as a mental activity; he uses the verbs *μανθάνω*, *γινώσκω*, and *νοέω* to describe this activity (in *CA* 20.6–7). In this respect the meaning of *ἐκμελετάω* does not differ from the simplex *μελετάω*; see LSJ, s.vv. For instances of the latter with the meaning ‘meditate,’ cf. the references in n. 328 above; further also LXX Sir 6:37, 14:20; LXX Ps 1:2; 76:6, 13; 118:148; 142:5. More references may be found in the commentary by Spicq on 1 Tim 4:15 (*Épîtres pastorales* 1.518–19). For an example with *ἐκμελετάω*, cf. Irenaeus *Haer.* 2.27.1, frg. gr. 3 Rousseau-Doutreleau: ὁ <δὲ> ὑγιῆς νοῦς καὶ ἀκίνδυνος καὶ εὐλαβὴς καὶ φιλαλήθης, ὅσα ἐν τῇ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐξουσίᾳ δέδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ὑποτέταχεν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ γνώσει, ταῦτα προθύμως ἐκμελετήσῃ καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς προκόψει, διὰ τῆς καθημερινῆς ἀσκήσεως ῥοδίαν τὴν μάθησιν αὐτῶν ποιούμενος.

³³² Pythagoras is accredited with the invention and definition of the term in Heraclides Ponticus frg. 44 Wehrli = Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* 2.130.3. Burkert, however, is skeptical (*Lore and Science*, 65).

³³³ See Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981).

³³⁴ Cf. also [Isocrates] *Demoniac.* 12: διόπερ ἐγὼ σοι πειράσομαι συντόμως ὑποθέσθαι, δι’ ὧν ἂν μοι δοκεῖς ἐπιτηδευμάτων πλείστον πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἐπιδοῦναι.

reached by means of a purification of the subject, which, as we have seen in *GV* 9–44, entails a rationalization of behavior and acquiring self-knowledge.³³⁵

‘Divine virtue’ has two possible meanings, probably deliberately. On the one hand, it can mean ‘the virtue that makes divine’; in this case we have an *hypallage adiectivi* in which the adjective is attached to the cause instead of to the effect. On the other hand, Virtue is here personified, and represents an aspect of the deity. “To follow in the footsteps of divine Virtue” is then a paraphrase of the well-known Pythagorean motto, ἔπον θεῶ (“Follow God”).³³⁶ This motto came to be identified with the Platonic ideal of ὁμοίωσις θεῶ (‘likeness to God’).³³⁷ The word ‘footsteps’ (ἔχνη) denotes proximity, but also indicates that ‘becoming like God’ is a gradual process, not a goal that is easily attained. The metaphor may be either that of following a leader, or of hunting a desired quarry.³³⁸

³³⁵ On the purification of the subject in Platonic mysticism, see André-Jean Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks* (Sather Classical Lectures 26; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1954) 43; Louth, *Mystical Tradition*, 7–11. For self-knowledge as prerequisite for ‘approaching God,’ cf. *Corp. Herm.* 1.21: ὁ νοήσας ἑαυτὸν εἰς αὐτὸν χωρεῖ. I follow Reitzenstein in taking αὐτὸν to refer to God; see A. D. Nock and A.-J. Festugière, eds., *Corpus Hermeticum* (Budé; 4 vols.; 4–6th ed.; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1980–83) 1.23 n. 52. This passage, and indeed the topic as a whole, is discussed in Hans Dieter Betz, “The Delphic Maxim Γνῶθι Σαυτόν in Hermetic Interpretation,” *Hellenismus und Urchristentum: Gesammelte Aufsätze I* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1990) 95–111. Cf. also Raoul Mortley, “Gnosis I (Erkenntnislehre),” *RAC* 11 (1981) 469.

³³⁶ Cf. Arius Didymus ap. Stobaeus 2.7.3f; Iamblichus *VP* 86, 137 (ἀκολουθεῖν τῷ θεῷ); Plutarch *De superst.* 9.169e, *De def. or.* 7.413b (βελτιστοὶ γιγνώμεθα πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς βαδίζοντες); Anonymus Photii, p. 238.3–4 Thesleff (ὁμοιοῦντας ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ); Aelianus *VH* 12.59; Iamblichus *VP* 66 (ἐξομοιωθῆναι κατ’ ἔφεσιν καὶ ἀπομίμησιν τοῖς οὐρανίοις). See Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 59–60, 296 (with more references); Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* 1.565 n. 5 and esp. 566–67: “Die wesentliche Lebensaufgabe des Menschen ist somit seine sittliche Reinigung und Vervollkommnung; und wenn er hierbei während seines irdischen Lebens immer auf ein unvollendetes Streben beschränkt bleibt, wenn ihm statt der Weisheit bloß die Tugend oder das Streben nach Weisheit möglich ist, so folgt daraus nur, daß er bei diesem Streben der Stützen nicht entbehren kann, welche ihm die Beziehung zur Gottheit darbietet. Die pythagoreische Ethik hat daher einen durchaus religiösen Charakter: der Gottheit zu folgen und ähnlich zu werden, soll ihr oberster Grundsatz gewesen sein.”

³³⁷ So explicitly Stobaeus 2.7.3f, who quotes Homer *Od.* 5.193: μετ’ ἔχνηα βᾶινε θεοῖο; cf. also Hierocles in *CA* 20.7: ταῦτά σε τῆς θεῆς ἀρετῆς εἰς ἔχνηα θήσει, ταυτέστι, ταῦτά σε ὁμοιώσει θεῷ. The basic discussion is by Hubert Merki, ‘ΟΜΟΙΩΣΙΣ ΘΕΩ: Von der platonischen Angleichung an Gott zur Gottähnlichkeit bei Gregor von Nyssa (Paradosis 7; Freiburg, Switzerland: Paulusverlag, 1952); see esp. pp. 1–2 on Pythagorean antecedents. Robert Joly finds this notion already present in ancient Pythagoreanism (“Les origines de l’ὁμοίωσις θεῷ,” *RBPh* 42 [1964] 91–95).

³³⁸ For other occurrences of this or a similar metaphor, cf. Homer *Od.* 5.193; Plato *Phdr.* 252e–253a, *Resp.* 3.401c, 5.462 (hunting?); Rom 4:12: τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν τοῖς ἔχνησιν

The personification of 'Αρετή combined with a 'way' metaphor is a commonplace in Greco-Roman moralistic literature. The most influential example is Prodicus' parable of Heracles at the cross-roads, where he has to choose between Virtue and Vice. The road to virtue is fraught with labor and difficulties (cf. *πόνει* in GV 45), while the other road is an easy one to follow.³³⁹ The same topos is also to be found in a Pythagorean sepulchral inscription from the 1st century AD that was found near Lydian Philadelphia. The inscription contains an epigram in which the author, named Pythagoras, claims to have become like his famous namesake in wisdom, and states that he also considered labor (*πόνος*) as something to be preferred in this life.³⁴⁰ Next to the epigram is a depiction of the Pythagorean symbol *Y* (denoting the two ways), with a woman (identified by an inscription above her head) on each side. On the left we find 'Ασωτία ('Prodigality') next to a depiction of the prodigal life (a man making love to a woman on a couch). On the right is 'Αρετή with a depiction of the virtuous life (a man plowing a field in one scene and sleeping peacefully in his bed in another). This inscription clearly shares several ideas with the *Golden Verses*, namely, the personification of 'Αρετή, the emphasis on *πόνος*, and the Two Way symbolism which also plays a role in the *Golden Verses* (see GV 50–60).³⁴¹

47–48a The author affirms the promise made in the previous verse by citing the famous Pythagorean oath.³⁴² This oath circu-

της ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ πίστεως; 1 Pet 2:21; 2 Cor 12:18; *Mart. Pol.* 22.1; cf. also LXX Sir 51:13–15 (hunting). For Plato's use of *ιχνεύειν* and similar terms, see Édouard des Places, *Études platoniciennes: 1929–1979* (EPRO 90; Leiden: Brill, 1981) 39–40.

³³⁹ First recounted in Xenophon *Mem.* 2.1.21–33. The first occurrence of the Two Way motif in Greek literature is in Hesiod *Op.* 287–92. For the motif in later literature and in other traditions, see Wilhelm Michaelis, "ὁδός," *TDNT* 5.42–96; Betz, *Lukian von Samosata*, 205–6; Jan Bergman, "Zum Zwei-Wege-Motif: Religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Bemerkungen," *SEd* 41–42 (1976–77) 27–56.

³⁴⁰ For a description and interpretation of the inscription, see A. Brinkmann, "Ein Denkmal des Neupythagoreismus," *RhM* n.s. 66 (1911) 616–25; the text is published on p. 616:

οὐ γενόμεν Σάμιος [κ]εῖνος ὁ Πυθαγόρας,
ἀλλ' ἐφύην σοφίῃ, τὰτ' ὀλαχῶν ὄνομ' αἶμα,
τὸν πόνον <ον> ἐνκρίνας αἰρετὸν [ἐν βίῳ τῳ
..... ρα οὐτο]

³⁴¹ Another 'Pythagorean' text in which these ideas figure prominently, is the *Tabula of Cebes*.

³⁴² The basic study is by Armand Delatte, "La tétractys pythagoricienne," *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 249–68. See also Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 72–73, 186–88; van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 103–10.

lated independently of the *Golden Verses* and there can be no doubt that the author of the latter adapted the former to fit the present context, rather than that the oath derives from the *Golden Verses*. The oath is widely attested with slight variations, the original form probably being the following:

οὐ μὰ τὸν ἀμετέρῃ ψυχῇ παραδόντα τετρακτύν,
παγὰν ἀενάου φύσεως ῥίζωμά τ' ἔχουσιν.³⁴³

The testimonia give no clear indication of how and when the oath was used; the most plausible surmise is that it was taken by initiates to ensure the secrecy of the Pythagorean esoteric doctrines. Such oaths were often used by other scientific schools and religious sects as well.³⁴⁴

Since this conclusion regarding the *Sitz im Leben* of the oath is based mainly on the *negative* form of the oath, van der Waerden argues that the *positive* form found in the *Golden Verses* indicates that the author of the poem no longer considers it necessary to keep the Pythagorean doctrines secret, that the Pythagorean doctrine of salvation should be made known to all people instead.³⁴⁵ This deduction goes beyond the evidence of the text; indeed, as we shall see later in the poem, the *Golden Verses* (as exoteric text) refers to, and implies the existence of, other texts which might well have been kept secret. The change of the negative οὐ to ναί is therefore entirely due to the exigencies of the immediate context in which the author wants to use the oath as a positive affirmation of his promise.³⁴⁶

³⁴³ For the testimonia, see chap. 2, n. 2 above; for the variants, see the critical apparatus to Young's edition of the text. Additional references to probable allusions are to be found in Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 250n. After a discussion of the variants, Delatte suggests the version quoted in the text above as the most original (*ibid.*, 250–52). See also pp. 37–38 above.

³⁴⁴ See Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 265–68. His conclusion has been universally accepted by subsequent scholarship. For oaths taken by members of associations, clubs, and guilds, see also Joseph Plescia, *The Oath and Perjury in Ancient Greece* (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1970) 77.

³⁴⁵ Van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 107, 155–56.

³⁴⁶ Apart from testimonia which obviously depend on the *Golden Verses*, the positive form with ναί is also found in Hippolytus *Haer.* 6.23.4 and in Methodius *Symp.* 6.5.147. Hippolytus' citation is not from the *Golden Verses* since he gives the full form of the oath, including the final hemistich of the second line (ῥιζώματ' ἔχουσιν), but his use of the positive particle ναί may well be an unconscious slip *because he knew the positive form from the Golden Verses!* It is very probable that Methodius' starting point was the *Golden Verses* itself, and not the oath. He only uses the first line, which he adapts for his own purpose, but the context points to more extensive knowledge of the *Golden Verses*. After addressing *three*

There can be little doubt that the phrase τὸν παραδόντα refers to Pythagoras.³⁴⁷ This identification is made in many of the testimonia, without any alternative interpretation being proffered.³⁴⁸ Swearing an oath by Pythagoras implies, of course, that he was considered a semi-divine being,³⁴⁹ an inference which is borne out by ample evidence elsewhere as well. He belonged to the race of Zeus, he was considered a son or an incarnation of Apollo, he performed many miracles and he had a golden thigh as evidence of his divinity.³⁵⁰

καὶ μετὰ τῶν θεῶν τὸν Πυθαγόραν λοιπὸν κατηρίθουν ὡς ἀγαθὸν
τινα δαίμονα καὶ φιланθρωπότατον, οἱ μὲν τὸν Πύθιον, οἱ δὲ τὸν ἐξ
Ἵπερβορέων Ἀπόλλωνα, οἱ δὲ τὸν Παιῶνα, οἱ δὲ τῶν τῆν σελήνην
κατοικούντων δαιμόνων ἕνα.... ἱστορεῖ δὲ καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τοῖς
περὶ τῆς Πυθαγορικῆς φιλοσοφίας διαίρεσίν τινα τοιάνδε ὑπὸ τῶν
ἀνδρῶν ἐν τοῖς πάνυ ἀπορρήτοις διαφυλάττεσθαι· τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῶου τὸ
μὲν ἐστὶ θεός, τὸ δ' ἄνθρωπος, τὸ δὲ οἶον Πυθαγόρας.

commands to the virgins to prepare themselves for the coming of the Bridegroom (ἔτε ..., ἔτε ..., ἔτε ...; cf. GV 45), he assures them that they will receive what has been promised (cf. GV 46), and then confirms it with an oath: τεύξεσθε γὰρ τῶν ἐπαγγελμάτων, καὶ μὰ τὸν ἀμετέρως ζωῆς δείξαντα κέλευθον. In the oath he also uses a way metaphor, and in the very next sentence he invokes personified Virtue (ὦ Ἀρετῇ).

³⁴⁷ Contra Zeller, who argues that the original oath had ἀμετέρῃ γενεᾷ instead of ἀμετέρῃ ψυχᾷ, and then continues: “Bei jener Lesart kann nämlich der παραδούς nur Pythagoras sein, wie dies die ursprüngliche Meinung der Verse gewesen zu sein scheint ..., während die andere erlaubte, unter dem παραδούς die Gottheit zu verstehen und somit dem Verfasser, wenn sich dieser für Pythagoras ausgab, den Widersinn ersparte ..., diesen bei sich selbst schwören zu lassen” (*Philosophie der Griechen* 1.378 n. 3). See the discussion of this position, chap. 4, n. 4 above.

³⁴⁸ Cf. Theo of Smyrna *Expos. rer. math.*, p. 94.8: τὸν παραδόντα Πυθαγόραν λέγουσιν; Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 4.2, 7.94; Porphyry VP 20; Iamblichus VP 150, 162; *Theol. ar.*, p. 22.18–19; Hierocles in CA 20.20; David Proll. 15, p. 48.24–28.

³⁴⁹ Cf. Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 4.2: οἱ ... Πυθαγορικοὶ ... ὁμνούντες οὐ μόνον τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν ὑποδείξαντα αὐτοῖς τοῦτον Πυθαγόραν ὡς θεόν; 7.94: τὸν μὲν παραδόντα λέγοντες Πυθαγόραν (τοῦτον γὰρ ἐθεοποιοῦν); Porphyry VP 20: τὴν τετρακτύν, δι' αὐτῆς ἐπώμουν ὡς θεόν τινα τὸν Πυθαγόραν; Iamblichus VP 150: ἀναφέρεται γε μὴν εἰς τοὺς Πυθαγορικοὺς καὶ τοιούδε τις ὄρκος, αἰδῶ μὲν ποιουμένων ὀνομάζειν Πυθαγόραν (ὥσπερ καὶ θεῶν ὀνόμασι χρῆσθαι πολλὴν φειδῶ ἐποιοῦντο), διὰ δὲ τῆς εὐρέσεως τῆς τετρακτύος δηλούντων τὸν ἄνδρα; Proclus Arab. f. 107^r. The avoidance of his name thus also indicates his superhuman status; cf. further Iamblichus VP 53, 88, 255; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 179.

³⁵⁰ Cf. Aristotle frg. 191 Rose (= Apollonius *Mir.* 6; Aelianus *VH* 2.26, 4.17; Diogenes Laertius 8.11; Iamblichus VP 140–43); Iamblichus VP 3, 5–8, 10. References to, and discussion of other sources may conveniently be found in Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 120–65, esp. 141–46. See in general also Ludwig Bieler, ΘΕΙΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ: *Das Bild des 'göttlichen Menschen' in Spätantike und Frühchristentum* (2 vols; Vienna: Buchhandlung Höfels, 1935–36); Hans Dieter Betz, “Gottmensch II,” *RAC* 12 (1983) 234–312, esp. 257–59 (“Pythagoras”).

They numbered Pythagoras among the gods as a good spirit and a great friend to men; some of them identified him with the Pythian, some with the Hyperborean, some with the Paeon Apollo, and others with one of the spirits that inhabit the moon.... Aristotle relates in his work on the Pythagorean philosophy that the following division was preserved by the Pythagoreans as one of their greatest secrets—that there are three kinds of rational living creatures—gods, men, and beings like Pythagoras.³⁵¹

The latter statement locates Pythagoras in the sphere of the *daimones*, that is, as an intermediary who could mediate between the divine and the human spheres.³⁵² The use of the oath in this context makes Pythagoras a guarantor of the promise in the previous verse; he himself will assist the student in attaining the desired goal. Pythagoras thus becomes a kind of guiding *daimon*.

In the oath he is revered as a semi-divine revealer figure, the one who introduced us to the mystery of the τετρακτύς.³⁵³ For the Pythagoreans the τετρακτύς was a complex symbol, the meaning of which still remains enigmatic.³⁵⁴ The term literally means 'group of four,' and primarily denotes the first four numbers, 1, 2, 3, and 4. Several factors contribute to the marvelous nature of these four numbers. In the first place, their sum is ten, the complete number, since from it all other numbers can be generated.³⁵⁵ Expressed as a pebble figure, the four numbers form a 'perfect' (i.e., an equilateral) triangle:³⁵⁶

³⁵¹ Aristotle frg. 192 Rose = Iamblichus VP 30–31; trans. W. D. Ross, *The Works of Aristotle 12: Select Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952) 136–37. Cf. also the *akousma* "Who are you, Pythagoras?" cited by Aristotle ap. Iamblichus VP 140 (with my commentary in "Pythagorean *Akousmata*," 102–3); Apollonius of Tyana *Ep.* 50.

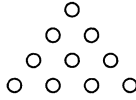
³⁵² See Detienne, 'Daimôn' dans le pythagorisme, 93–94, 131–39, 177; Cosenza, "Demone" e "sorte," 28–29.

³⁵³ Hierocles calls Pythagoras ὁ τε τῆς τετρακτύος ἱεροφάντης (in CA 20.21, p. 90.2 Koehler).

³⁵⁴ See Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 253–64; Pierre Boyancé, "Note sur la tétractys," AC 20 (1951) 421–25; Paul Kucharski, *Étude sur la doctrine pythagoricienne de la tétrade* (Collection d'études anciennes; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1952); Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 72–73, 186–88; van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 105–10.

³⁵⁵ See, e.g., Aristotle *Metaph.* 986a8–10; Aëtius 1.3.8; Theo of Smyrna *Expos. rer. math.*, p. 93; Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 4.3, 7.94; Lucian *Vit. auct.* 4; Hippolytus *Haer.* 1.2.8–9; *Hymn. ad num.*, p. 173 Thesleff (= Orphic frg. 315 Kern); more references in Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 256–57.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Lucian *Vit. auct.* 4: "What you consider four, is ten, and a perfect triangle, and our oath."



Furthermore, the principal harmonic intervals can be represented as ratios of these numbers, the fourth as 4:3, the fifth as 3:2, the octave as 4:2 or 2:1, and the double octave as 4:1.³⁵⁷ They contain the basic geometric elements, namely, point (= 1), line (= 2), plane (= 3), and solid (= 4). Many other important series also have four terms: there are four basic elements (earth, water, air, fire), four cardinal virtues, four intellectual faculties (νοῦς, ἐπιστήμη, δόξα, αἴσθησις), four seasons, and so on.³⁵⁸

The discovery of these numerical relationships, and more—one can continue with this kind of thing *ad nauseam*, as was in fact done in late antiquity—led Pythagoreans to postulate number as the basic principle in the universe, a doctrine encapsulated in sayings like the following: “Everything is like number” (ἀριθμῶ δέ τε πάντ’ ἐπέοικεν); “Things exist by imitating numbers” (μιμήσει τὰ ὄντα εἶναι τῶν ἀριθμῶν); “The whole heaven is harmony and number” (τὸν ὅλον οὐρανὸν ἁρμονίαν εἶναι καὶ ἀριθμόν); and the *akousma* “What is the wisest? Number” (τί τὸ σοφώτατον; ἀριθμός).³⁵⁹ Since the first four numbers contain the decad, and by extension all other numbers, the τετρακτύς can be considered “the fount and root of ever flowing nature.”

But there is still more. One of the *akousmata* asks, “What is the oracle of Delphi?” and then answers, “The tetraktys; that is, the harmony in which the Sirens sing” (τί ἐστὶ τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς μαντεῖον; τετρακτύς· ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ ἁρμονία, ἐν ᾗ αἱ Σειρήνες). The ‘harmony’ is the ‘harmony of the spheres’ that Pythagoras

³⁵⁷ Cf., e.g., Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 4.6–9, 7.95–98; Theo of Smyrna *Expos. rer. math.*, pp. 93–94; more references in Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 258. See also Hermann Koller, “Harmonie und Tetraktys,” *MH* 16 (1959) 238–48.

³⁵⁸ Cf., e.g., Aëtius 1.3.8; Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 4.4–5, 7.99–100; Hippolytus *Haer.* 6.23.3–5; Hierocles in *CA* 20.17–19; David Proll, 15, pp. 48–49; more texts discussed in Kucharski, *Doctrine pythagoricienne*.

³⁵⁹ Cf. Iamblichus *VP* 162 = Orphic frg. 317 Kern; Aristotle *Metaph.* 987b11–12, 986a2–3, 21; Iamblichus *VP* 82. Zhmud’ is skeptical that Pythagoreans before Aristotle indeed held such a doctrine (“‘All is Number?’”).

alone could hear;³⁶⁰ it is produced by the voices of Sirens sitting in each planetary sphere (cf. Plato *Resp.* 10.617b). According to the *Odyssey* 12.184–89 the Sirens knew all secrets; they are therefore identified with Apollo on the basis of their musical and prophetic nature.³⁶¹ The *τετρακτύς* then, encompassing the basic arithmological and harmonic ratios, contains the clue to the mysteries of the universe, just as the oracle of Delphi affords insight in the most secret wisdom.

Before we leave the oath, we may finally consider the use of the expression ‘to our *soul*.’³⁶² It implies of course an intimate, secret knowledge, but perhaps we could take it even further. It was in an ecstatic state, probably while his soul was traveling through the universe, that Pythagoras could hear the harmony of the spheres.³⁶³ Although the soul’s ecstatic journey through the universe is a common topos in Greek philosophy,³⁶⁴ it has been suggested that this journey had its origin in a Pythagorean ritual.³⁶⁵ If this was indeed the case, the phrase under considera-

³⁶⁰ See Porphyry *VP* 30; Iamblichus *VP* 65–66, esp. 66: ἐαυτῷ μὲν γὰρ μόνῳ τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς πάντων συνετὰ καὶ ἐπήκοα τὰ κοσμικὰ φθέγματα ἐνόμισε, καὶ ἀπ’ αὐτῆς τῆς φυσικῆς πηγῆς τε καὶ ῥίξης ἄξιον ἐαυτὸν ἡγεῖτο διδάσκεισθαι τι καὶ ἐκμανθάνειν καὶ ἐξομοιοῦσθαι κατ’ ἔφεσιν καὶ ἀπομίμῃσιν τοῖς οὐρανίοις, ὡς ἂν οὕτως ἐπιτυχῶς πρὸς τοῦ φύσαντος αὐτὸν δαίμονιον μόνον διωργανόμενον. More references in Deubner, *De vita Pythagorica*, 36n; Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 76 n. 1, 262 n. 1.

³⁶¹ See Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 260–62; Boyancé, “Note sur la tétractys”; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 187; also 350–57, on the harmony of the spheres in general. See the very interesting article by Jean Pépin, “Harmonie der Sphären,” *RAC* 13 (1986) 593–618, esp. 609–10 (“Das Pythagoras-Problem”).

³⁶² In some variants of the oath ‘head’ or ‘generation’ is used instead, which would, of course, lead to a different interpretation than the one given below.

³⁶³ Cf. ‘Pythagoras’ in the scholion on Homer *Od.* 1.371 = p. 172.7 Thesleff: ἐξω γενόμενος τοῦ σώματος ἀκήκοα ἐμμελοῦς ἁρμονίας. See Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 357. Experiences like this belong to the ‘shamanistic’ aspect of Pythagoras; see *ibid.*, 120–65; Pépin, “Harmonie der Sphären,” 609–10.

³⁶⁴ See Roger Miller Jones, “Posidonius and the Flight of the Mind through the Universe,” *CPh* 21 (1926) 97–113; A. J. Festugière, “Les thèmes du Songe de Scipion,” *Eranos* 44 (1946) 370–88; *idem*, *La révélation d’Hermès Trismégiste* (4 vols.; 1st–3d ed.; Paris: Gabalda, 1949–54; reprint, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1983) 2.441–58; Hermann Koller, “Jenseitsreise des Philosophen,” *Asiatische Studien* 27 (1973) 35–57; Pierre Courcelle, “Flügel (Flug) der Seele I,” *RAC* 8 (1972) 29–65.

³⁶⁵ Koller, “Jenseitsreise des Philosophen”; *idem*, “Die Jenseitsreise: Ein pythagoreischer Ritus,” *Symbolon* 7 (1971) 33–52. Cf. also Walter Burkert, “Das Proömium des Parmenides und die Katabasis des Pythagoras,” *Phronesis* 14 (1969) 1–30; Wolfgang Fauth, “Astraios und Zamolxis: Über Spuren pythagoreischer Aretalogie im Thule-Roman des Antonius Diogenes,” *Hermes* 106 (1978) 220–41; Wolfgang Speyer, “Die Vision der wunderbaren Höhle,” in *Jenseitsvorstellungen in Antike und Christentum: Gedenkschrift für Alfred Stuiber* (ed. Theodor Klauser, Ernst Dassmann, and Klaus Thraede; JbAC Ergänzungsband 9; Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1982) 188–97;

tion may allude to such a ritual during which the soul obtained an insight into the mysteries of nature. (Cf. also the commentary on GV 64 below.)

48b–49a The section concludes with a summary command that once again enjoins the student to work at the precepts given, thus reiterating the exhortation of GV 45. While divine assistance was only implied in GV 46–47 (the guidance of divine Virtue, the guaranty of the *daimon* Pythagoras), it is here explicitly stated as a desideratum to be prayed for. A prayer for assistance in attaining a state of perfection is in accord with other Pythagorean teachings as well.³⁶⁶ The underlying notion is that of *συνεργία*, a cooperation between god and human beings in the interest of human salvation.³⁶⁷ The *τέλος* of the student's labor, only hinted at in GV 46, is expressed at the very end of the poem in no uncertain terms: "You will be immortal, an undying god, no longer mortal."

B ULTIMATE GOALS AND BENEFITS (GV 49b–71)

The final third of the *Golden Verses* (GV 49b–71) exhibits a distinct change in tone and content. Whereas the first part of the poem is characterized by commands and precepts, this part indicates the benefits to be gained by practicing the way of life set out in the previous verses. It manifests many of the characteristics of a *peroratio* (conclusion):³⁶⁸ we find a preponderance of promises (GV 50–51, 52–53, 54, 65, 66, 70–71) and the occurrence of warnings (GV 55–60), a prayer (GV 61–62), a consolation (GV 63–64), and final commands (GV 67–69). Furthermore, this final part refers back to topics treated earlier and alludes to future, more advanced, knowledge. In the endings of other, comparable

Johan C. Thom, "The Journey Up and Down: Pythagoras in Two Greek Apologists," *ChHist* 58 (1989) 299–308.

³⁶⁶ Cf. *Pyth. Sent.* 3, 121; *Sextus Sent.* 122, 124, 125, 134; also *Porph. Marc.* 12–13; *Diogenes Laertius* 8.9; *Iamblichus VP* 145.

³⁶⁷ Thus also Hierocles in *CA* 21.1–8; cf. also Proclus Arab. f. 108^v. For the topos, see Georg Bertram, "συνεργός κτλ.," *TDNT* 7.871–76, esp. 872–73; W. Joest, "Synergismus," *RGG* 6.561–62; more references in Bauer-Aland, s.vv. *συνεργέω*, *συνεργός*; *LPGL*, s.v. *συνέργεια*.

³⁶⁸ For the characteristics of a *peroratio*, see Lausberg, *Handbuch*, §§ 431–42. The main emotions aimed at in the *peroratio* of the *genus deliberativum*—which is perhaps the classical *genus* with which the *Golden Verses* has the most in common—are *spes et metus* ('hope and fear'); see *ibid.*, § 437.

texts we often find indications of the eschatological benefits of practicing the teachings advanced in those texts, but this is usually done much more briefly than is the case here.³⁶⁹

The section as a whole may be divided into two subsections, namely, *GV* 49b–64, which promise insight into important metaphysical questions, and *GV* 65–71, which contain concluding commands and promises. As we shall see, *GV* 50–71 as a whole are based on an Orphic-Pythagorean view of man, his position in the universe, and the way to salvation.³⁷⁰

1 *Insight into Metaphysical Questions (GV 49b–64)*

After a connecting phrase (*GV* 49b), various metaphysical questions to which the initiate will receive answers, are indicated. They are (a) the relationship between gods and human beings (*GV* 50–51), (b) the constitution of nature (*GV* 52–53), and (c) the cause of suffering (*GV* 54–60). The following verses contain a prayer and assurances concerning (d) salvation from evil (*GV* 61–62), (e) the divinity of certain mortals (*GV* 63), and (f) the secrets of nature (*GV* 64). It is immediately clear that (d) corresponds to (c), (e) to (a), and (f) to (b). We therefore have a kind of chiasmic arrangement: A (the relation between gods, men, and nature), B (suffering and salvation), A' (the divinity of men and the secrets of nature). Also, (d), (e), and (f) provide partial 'answers' to the questions raised in (a), (b), and (c).

It is obvious, however, that much is left unsaid; the answers are implied rather than spelled out. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the author did not intend to give the full answers in the *Golden Verses* itself. He simply indicated what further, advanced knowledge the student may expect if he continued along this path. A teaching practice is therefore implied that went beyond the *Golden Verses*.³⁷¹

The formulaic character of some of the material in these verses

³⁶⁹ Cf., e.g., Epicurus *Ep. ad Menoecum* 135; Pseudo-Phocylides 229–30 (with the commentary by van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 261); the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 7:21–27); *Did.* 16.

³⁷⁰ For the close relationship between Orphism and Pythagoreanism, see chap. 8, pp. 89–90 above.

³⁷¹ According to Dragona-Monachou, the *Golden Verses* follows the Stoic order of the parts of philosophy, i.e., physics comes after ethics (“*Τίμνος στὸ Δίαι*,” 342). *GV* 50–64 do not really contain physical doctrines, however; they only hint at such knowledge.

("You will know ..., you will know ..., you will know ..."; GV 50, 52, 54) seems to indicate that this section of the poem alludes to a catechism containing questions like "What is the relationship between gods and mortals?" "What is nature?" "What is the cause of suffering?" and so on. Such catechisms were often used in the service of both philosophical and revelatory concerns; they were especially popular in Gnostic circles.³⁷²

In this context the Pythagorean catechism consisting of *akousmata* comes to mind.³⁷³ According to Aristotle, the questions contained in this catechism can be divided into three categories: *τί ἐστι*; *τί μάλιστα*; and *τί πρακτέον*; The first group consists of quasi-definitions such as "What are the Isles of the Blest? Sun and moon." "What is the oracle of Delphi? The *tetraktys*, which is also the harmony in which the Sirens sing." The second group contains questions like "What is most just? To sacrifice." "What is the wisest? Number." "What is the most beautiful? Harmony." The final group consists of various ritualistic precepts: "One ought to beget children, for we have to leave behind people to worship the gods." "One should put on the right shoe first." "Don't walk on the highways."³⁷⁴

The catechism which the *Golden Verses* appears to reflect, however, would have more in common with Platonic-Stoic or Gnostic-Hermetic sets of questions. Here we find questions such as "What is god?" "What is the world?" "Who are we?" "Why have we come into being?" "Where are we going?" "What is generation?" "What is regeneration?"³⁷⁵ Catechisms like these all attempt to fulfill a desire for a complete view of the world ("eine geschlossene Weltanschauung") and of man's position within it, a

³⁷² See Heinrich Dörrie and Hermann Dörries, "Erotapokriseis," *RAC* 6 (1966) 342-70; Eduard Norden, "Die Composition und Litteraturgattung der horazischen epistula ad Pisones," *Hermes* 40 (1905) 481-528, esp. 515-26 ("die isagogische Litteratur"); idem, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1923) 99-109; Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même* 1, chap. 5.

³⁷³ For literature, see chap. 8, n. 5 above.

³⁷⁴ Ap. Iamblichus VP 82-86. These and some of the other *akousmata* are collected in DK 58C. One misses a discussion of the Pythagorean material in Dörrie and Dörries, "Erotapokriseis."

³⁷⁵ Cf., e.g., Seneca *Ep.* 82.6; *QNat* 1, praef. 13; Persius 3.66-70; Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 1.6.25, 2.10; Marcus Aurelius 8.52; Albinus *Introd. in Plat.* 7; Clement of Alexandria *Exc. ex Theod.* 78; *Acts of Thomas* 15; *Corp. Herm.* 8.5: εὐφήμεσον, ὦ τέκνον, καὶ νόησον τί θεός, τί κόσμος, τί ζῶον ἀθάνατον, τί ζῶον διαλυτόν, καὶ νόησον ὅτι ὁ μὲν κόσμος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ θεῷ, ὁ δὲ ἄνθρωπος ὑπὸ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἀρχὴ δὲ καὶ περιοχὴ καὶ σύστασις πάντων ὁ θεός; more references in Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, 99-109.

desire particularly prevalent from the 1st century BC onward.³⁷⁶ Some of the questions on which the catechisms were based, however, are much older; they are already discernible in formulae of the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries.³⁷⁷

The emphasis on knowledge and insight into the human condition is something we have met before (GV 14–16). The theme is expanded here, however, to include the reciprocal relation between knowledge of self and knowledge of god and the world. Guthrie summarizes the train of thought in Pythagoreanism on which this notion of reciprocity is based as follows:

(a) The world is a *kosmos*—that untranslatable word which unites, as perhaps only the Greek spirit could, the notion of order, arrangement or structural perfection with that of beauty. (b) All nature is akin, therefore the soul of man is intimately related to the living and divine universe. (c) Like is known by like, that is, the better one knows something the more one is assimilated to it. Hence (d) to seek through philosophy for a better understanding of the structure of the divine *kosmos* is to realize and cultivate the divine element in oneself.³⁷⁸

We will encounter most of these ideas again in the verses that follow.³⁷⁹

GV 49b–51

τούτων δὲ κρατήσας
γνώσκει ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν θνητῶν τ' ἀνθρώπων
σύστασιν, ἧ τε ἕκαστα διέρχεται, ἧ τε κρατεῖται.

³⁷⁶ See Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, 99–109, esp. 99–102. Norden detects the influence of Posidonius behind many of the catechisms.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 108–9.

³⁷⁸ Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.206–7. His discussion of Pythagorean views on “man and his place in nature” (pp. 182–212) is of great value for the correct understanding of GV 50–71.

³⁷⁹ Most of these ideas are of course not peculiar to Pythagoreanism; through Plato they became part of the Greek tradition. Since Chrysippus, self-knowledge has become inextricably interwoven with a knowledge of physics (which in antiquity included knowledge of the gods). See Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même* 1.22–43, on the debate concerning the necessity for knowledge of physical phenomena in order to understand oneself. Cf. also the definition Albinus gives of the aim of physics: τοῦ φυσικοῦ [λόγου τέλος] τὸ μαθεῖν, τίς ποτ' ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ παντὸς φύσις καὶ οἷόν τι ζῶν ὁ ἀνθρώπος καὶ τίνα χώραν ἐν κόσμῳ ἔχων, ... καὶ τίς ἡ ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς σχέσις (*Introd. in Plat.* 7); as well as the Chrysippian definition of wisdom: τὴν μὲν σοφίαν εἶναι θεῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων ἐπιστήμην (*SVF* 2.35); and of the world: σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις φύσεων· ἡ τὸ ἐκ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων σύστημα καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἕνεκα τούτων γεγονότων (*SVF* 2.527). See, however, also n. 371 above.

When you have mastered these things,
you will come to know the essence of immortal gods and mortal men,
how it pervades each thing and how each thing is ruled [by it].

49b *τούτων δὲ κρατήσας* is a transitional phrase indicating that a mastery of all the preceding precepts is a prerequisite for enjoying the benefits that follow.³⁸⁰ Practicing these precepts purifies the soul, which in turn leads to an enhanced ability to understand the nature and metaphysical status of the soul.³⁸¹

50-51 In GV 51 and the immediately following verses we are confronted with several vexing problems.³⁸² With regard to GV 51, there first is a textual problem. Codex Vindobonensis (V), followed by a couple of lesser manuscripts and probably the Arabic version and Iamblichus Arabus as well, has *ἡ τε ... ἡ τε* in GV 51, while Monacensis (M) and most other manuscripts have *ῆ τε ... ῆ τε*.³⁸³ Recent editors have without exception preferred the latter reading; it is also the reading presupposed by the (widely divergent) interpretations Iamblichus and Hierocles give to this verse.³⁸⁴ Other problems concern the meaning of *σύστασις*, *διέρχ-*

³⁸⁰ Elsewhere in the *Golden Verses* too, similar phrases help indicate compositional shifts; cf. GV 9, 65.

³⁸¹ Cf. Dörrie, "Überlegungen," 9: "Es geht somit bei aller Kathartik darum, daß eine Reinigung und damit eine Verbesserung der Erkenntnisfähigkeit gewonnen wird." This is based on the Greek idea of the identity of thought and being in cosmology as well as in ethics, a notion succinctly expressed by Parmenides: *τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι* (frg. 3 DK); cf. Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 36-37.

³⁸² Cf. Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 61: "On a interprété ces vers [GV 50-53] de façons assez diverses: certains critiques n'ont pas craint de les considérer comme du charabia." It is also noteworthy that the ancient commentators vary considerably in their interpretations of these verses.

³⁸³ For the Arabic version see Rosenthal, "Pythagorean Documents," 114-15: "Verse 50/51 ... appears in the translation as: 'You will recognize the essence of what is the case concerning the behaviour of God and concerning His Saints and concerning us, the assembly of men, whatever of it is perishable, one part after the other, and whatever of it is enduring' (*mā minhu zā'ilun fi l-wāḥidi ba'da l-wāḥidi wa-mā minhu tābitun*). The translator surely read *ἦτε ... ἦτε*...." Iamblichus Arabus, as we have seen in chap. 2, cites the Arabic version for its lemmata; the commentary itself also appears to be based on this reading (*in CA* f. 307^v).

³⁸⁴ Iamblichus paraphrases with *κατὰ τί*: *τὸ δὲ θαυμασιώτατον ἐκεῖνο διδάσκεται ἀπὸ τῆς τοιαύτης εἰδήσεως, κατὰ τί διέρχεται εὐλύτως καὶ ἀκωλύτως ἕκαστα τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅσα ἐστὶ τῆς κρείττονος μοίρας, καὶ κατὰ τί κρατεῖται καὶ κωλύεται, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ῥαδίως ἐξίεναι καὶ τῶν δεσμῶν ἀπολύεσθαι* (*Protr.* 3, p. 11.22-26). Iamblichus interprets these verses in Neoplatonic fashion as referring to pure and impure parts of the soul; the former easily escape the bonds of the body, while the latter are held back. Such an interpretation is not very plausible in this context; cf. van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 37. Hierocles interprets GV 50-51 thus: *τῇν μὲν γὰρ σύνταξιν αὐτῶν ἐνταῦθα τὸ τῆς συστάσεως ὄνομα δηλοῖ, τὸ δέ, ἡ*

ομοι, and κρατέομαι, as well as the connection between the main clause and the two subordinate clauses.

σύστασις has a whole range of meanings, most of which denote a process of combination or the product of such a process.³⁸⁵ Meanings that may be applicable in this context are 'constitution,' 'composition,' 'structure,' 'nature,' 'essence,' 'union,' 'conjunction,' and so on.³⁸⁶ Choices by previous scholars may be classified into two broad categories: on the one hand, we find translations such as 'constitution,' 'essence,' and 'nature,' all of which focus on the *makeup* of gods and human beings;³⁸⁷ on the other hand, we have 'union,' 'bond,' 'relationship,' and so on, which emphasize the *connection* between gods and men.³⁸⁸ Both basic meanings seem equally plausible, and both will be taken into consideration in the discussion that follows.

Whether we read ἡ τε or ᾗ τε, the most natural interpretation would be that the subordinate clauses relate to σύστασιν in some way.³⁸⁹ Most critics interpret them as indirect questions, that is,

διέρχεται, τὴν κατ' εἶδος διαφορὰν καὶ τό, ᾗ κρατεῖται, τὴν κατὰ γένος κοινωνίαν. φύσει γὰρ διεστῶτα τῶν λογικῶν οὐσιῶν τὰ γένη κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν διάστασιν εἰς μίαν κοινωνίαν συνέρχεται (in CA 22.1-2). According to Hierocles these verses have to do with the distinction of the composite of rational beings into species, as well as with their subsumption within a common genus. Such an interpretation cannot be derived from the meanings of the various words under consideration, besides being anachronistic. The interpretation by Proclus Arabus seems to combine those of Iamblichus and Hierocles, although it is closer to the views of the former. It does not, however, allow for a precise determination of the text on which it is based; see Proclus Arab. in CA ff. 108^v-109^v.

³⁸⁵ See D. A. Russell, ed., *Longinus: On the Sublime* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964) 86.

³⁸⁶ See LSJ, s.v. σύστασις; Bauer-Aland, s.v.; *LPGL*, s.v.

³⁸⁷ Cf. Stephanus *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae* 7.1538C, s.v. σύστασις, where GV 51 is listed under the heading *Coagmentatio, Structura, Compositio*; Mullach, *Hieroclis commentarius*, 14 = *FPG* 1.197: *divinae humanaeque naturae conditio et constitutio*; Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 61: "la nature des dieux immortels et des hommes mortels"; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 42: "l'essenza degli dei immortali e degli uomini mortali."

³⁸⁸ Cf. van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 35: "l'union réciproque entre les dieux immortels et les hommes mortels"; cf. also the alternative translation proposed by Mullach, *Hieroclis commentarius*, 13-14 = *FPG* 1.197: *deorum immortalium hominumque mortalium conjunctio*. Van der Horst is followed by Méautis, *Sagesse pythagoricienne*, 32; Schröder, "Nobele geest," 105; and van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 151. Cf. also Köhler's translation of the lemma in Hierocles: "der Zusammenhang zwischen unsterblichen Göttern ... und sterblichen Menschen" (*Hierokles*, 74-75). Van der Horst's interpretation of GV 51 is criticized by Puech, without motivating his objection, however; his criticism may therefore pertain to the interpretation of the subordinate clauses only (*JS* [1933] 271).

³⁸⁹ Some scholars, however, interpret the ᾗ τε clauses as additional substantive clauses dependent on γνῶσκει, i.e., "You will know the σύστασις of gods and men, and you will know how everything passes, etc."; see Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 61; Méautis, *Sagesse pythagoricienne*, 32-33; Schröder, "Nobele geest," 105; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 42.

“how everything passes, how it remains the same,” or something similar.³⁹⁰ Even so, these clauses would be in apposition to *σύστασιν*. However, the meaning of the two subordinate clauses is not at all clear. Most scholars take *διέρχεται* to mean ‘pass (away)’ and *κρατέται* to mean the opposite, namely, ‘remain.’³⁹¹ The passive of *κρατέω* can probably support this meaning, but *διέρχομαι* only means ‘pass’ with reference to *time*, never with anything else. It usually has the literal meaning ‘go through’ or ‘pass through’; it can also be used for ‘pervade.’³⁹² Even if *διέρχεται* could have meant ‘pass away,’ the expression “how everything passes away, how it remains the same” still would not follow very well on the first half of the sentence.

Now if we keep *ἕκαστα* as subject of *διέρχεται*, as all previous scholars have done, the first subordinate clause literally means “how everything passes through,” which does not make much sense, unless we accept Iamblichus’ improbable interpretation.³⁹³ *ἕκαστα* can, however, also be taken as an *accusative* with *διέρχεται*,³⁹⁴ in which case the logical subject of the verb would be *σύστασις*. The resulting meaning would be “how it (sc. the *σύστασις*) passes through everything,” or rather, “how it (the *σύστασις*) pervades everything.” This meaning is in my view far superior to the commonly accepted one; its advantage will become even clearer when we finally consider the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

This leaves us with the second clause. Common meanings of the passive of *κρατέω* are ‘be ruled,’ ‘be controlled,’ ‘be mas-

³⁹⁰ Cf. Mullach, *Hieroclis commentarius*, 14 = FPG 1.197; Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 61; van der Horst, *Vers d’or*, 36; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 42; van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 151.

³⁹¹ See the authors cited in the previous note; further also Méautis, *Sagesse pythagoricienne*, 33; Schröder, “Nobele geest,” 105. This interpretation ultimately goes back to the Arabic version: “You will become acquainted with the innermost essence of God’s providence and that of His saints, and with all that concerns us human beings, *what of it ceases one by one and what remains constant*” (trans. Rosenthal, *Classical Heritage in Islam*, 120; emphasis added); cf. also Mullach, *Hieroclis commentarius*, 14–15 = FPG 1.197.

³⁹² For the literal meaning see LSJ, s.v. *διέρχομαι*; Bauer-Aland, s.v.; *LPGL*, s.v. This is also Iamblichus’ interpretation; see n. 384 above. For the meaning ‘pervade,’ cf. Chrysippus ap. Diogenes Laertius 7.88 = SVF 3.4, p. 4.2–3: ὁ νόμος ὁ κοινός, ὅσπερ ἐστὶν ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος διὰ πάντων ἐρχόμενος. We find the same meaning in Cleanthes *Hymn to Zeus* 12–13: ... κοινὸν λόγον, ὃς διὰ πάντων / φοιτᾷ.

³⁹³ See n. 384 above.

³⁹⁴ See LSJ, s.v. *διέρχομαι*, for the frequency of this construction.

tered,' 'be held,' 'be supported,' 'be maintained,' and so on. In view of the unmarked context I would suggest that we start with neutral meanings such as 'be ruled' or 'be held.' What is the subject of this verb? Normally one would expect the subject to be the same as that of the preceding clause, namely, *σύστασις*, but this does not make much sense, no matter what the meaning of the latter: "You will come to know the *σύστασις* (connection/essence) of gods and men, how it pervades everything, how it is ruled/held." However, a common form of brachylogy consists in taking the *object* of one clause as the implied *subject* of the next, without marking this change by a pronoun;³⁹⁵ *ἕκαστα*, the object of the first clause, could thus function as subject of the second. This gives us "You will come to know the *σύστασις* of gods and men, how it pervades everything, how everything is ruled/held [by it]."³⁹⁶

Let us return to the meaning of *σύστασις* and to that of the sentence as a whole. The first possibility is that *σύστασις* means 'constitutive essence.' What would this all-pervasive, all-encompassing or hegemonic 'essence' refer to? Some doxographic notices may provide a clue. According to Sextus Empiricus the Pythagoreans taught that gods and men were united by a living spirit or soul that pervaded the whole universe:

οἱ μὲν οὖν περὶ τὸν Πυθαγόραν καὶ τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέα καὶ τῶν Ἰταλῶν πλῆθος φασι μὴ μόνον ἡμῖν πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς εἶναι τινα κοινωνίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἄλογα τῶν ζώων. ἐν γὰρ ὑπάρχειν πνεῦμα τὸ διὰ παντὸς κόσμου διήκον ψυχῆς τρόπον, τὸ καὶ ἐνοῦν ἡμᾶς πρὸς ἐκεῖνα.

Now Pythagoras and Empedocles and the rest of the Italian company declare that we have some fellowship not only with one another and with the Gods but also with the irrational animals. For there is one spirit which pervades, like a soul, the whole Universe, and which also makes us one with them. (*Math.* 9.127; trans. R. G. Bury, LCL)

³⁹⁵ See Kühner-Gerth 2.561, § 597.2a.

³⁹⁶ This interpretation becomes even more probable if we read *σύστασιν ἢ τε ἕκαστα διέρχεται, ἢ τε κρατεῖται*, "the *σύστασις* which pervades everything and by which everything is ruled/held." It is true that there is no textual evidence for the combination *ἢ τε ... ἢ τε*; the MSS have either *ἢ τε ... ἢ τε* or *ἢ τε ... ἢ τε*. However, the very fact that textual differences exist, and the fact that the ancient commentators differ widely in their interpretation of *GV* 51 (see nn. 383 and 384 above), are ample evidence that this sentence was not understood in late Antiquity, hence the possibility for textual confusion and errors. An original *ἢ τε ... ἢ τε* could therefore have been normalized to either *ἢ τε ... ἢ τε* or *ἢ τε ... ἢ τε*.

Similarly, Cicero states that “Pythagoras ... believed that the entire substance of the universe is penetrated and pervaded by a soul of which our souls are fragments” (*Pythagoras ... censuit animum esse per naturam rerum omnem intentum et commeantem ex quo nostri animi carperentur*); further on in the same passage he speaks of the Pythagorean god that is “implanted in, or diffused throughout, the world” (*aut infixus aut infusus esset in mundo*; Cicero *Nat. D.* 1.11.27; trans. H. Rackham, LCL). The salient point underlying both these accounts and GV 50–51 is a belief in a divine element pervading the whole universe that is also shared by both gods and human beings. Although this belief may sound Stoic—and the accounts of Cicero and Sextus have indeed been suspected of Stoic influence³⁹⁷—there appears to have been an ancient Pythagorean doctrine that the world as a whole was a living, breathing being, and that ‘breath’ was therefore the link between the human and the divine spheres. This doctrine was known to Aristotle:

εἶναι δ' ἔφασαν καὶ οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι κενόν, καὶ ἐπεισιέναι αὐτὸ τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐκ τοῦ ἀπείρου πνεύματος ὡς ἀναπνέοντι καὶ τὸ κενόν, ὃ διορίζει τὰς φύσεις, ὡς ὄντος τοῦ κενοῦ χωρισμοῦ τινὸς τῶν ἐφεξῆς καὶ [τῆς] διορίσεως· καὶ τοῦτ' εἶναι πρῶτον ἐν τοῖς ἀριθμοῖς· τὸ γὰρ κενὸν διορίζειν τὴν φύσιν αὐτῶν.

The Pythagoreans also said that void exists, and that it enters the universe from the infinite breath, the universe being supposed to breathe in the actual void, which keeps different kinds of things apart; for they define void as that which separates and divides things that are next to each other. This happens first in numbers; the void divides their nature.³⁹⁸

Since the soul was universally identified with breath or air,

[the] conclusion drawn both by [the Orphics] and by the Pythagoreans was that if the world was a living, eternal and divine creature, and lived by breathing in air or breath from the infinite around it; and if man too got his life by breathing (which was evidence that the human soul itself was air); then the natural kinship between man and universe, micro-

³⁹⁷ Cf. Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 124.

³⁹⁸ Aristotle *Phys.* 213b22–27; trans. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.277. Very similar is Aristotle frg. 201 Rose ap. Stobaeus 1.18.1c (both passages from Aristotle are in DK 58B30). Cf. Simplicius' commentary on the passage cited in the text (*in Arist. Phys.*, p. 651.26); Aëtius 2.9.1. All these passages are cited and translated by Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.277. Cf. also Plutarch *Quaest. Plat.* 1007bc. See on this doctrine Augusto Rostagni, *Il verbo di Pitagora* (Turin: Bocca, 1924; reprint, Genoa: Il Basilisco, 1982), chap. 3.

cosm and macrocosm, must be close. The universe was one, eternal and divine. Men were many and divided, and they were mortal. But the essential part of man, his soul, was not mortal, and it owed its immortality to this circumstance, that it was neither more nor less than a small fragment or spark of the divine and universal soul, cut off and imprisoned in a perishable body.³⁹⁹

Other sources, such as the Pythagorean *Ἱερὸς λόγος* written in Doric, find the basis for the connection between the human and the divine spheres in number. This text, which Pythagoras is supposed to have received from the Orphic priest Aglaophamus, is to be dated in the 2d or 1st century BC according to Thesleff and contains various mystical and metaphysical doctrines on number.⁴⁰⁰ The *Ἱερὸς λόγος* contains the following statement:

τὸν ἀριθμῷ οὐσίαν αἰδίων εἶμεν ἀρχὰν προμαθεστάταν τῷ παντός
ὥρανῳ καὶ γᾶς καὶ τᾶς μεταξὺ φύσιος, ἔτι δὲ καὶ θνητῶν καὶ θεῶν καὶ
δαιμόνων διαμονῆς ρίζαν.

θνητῶν corr. Festugière, *Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* 1.338 n. 3: *θειῶν* cod.

The eternal essence of number is the all-providential origin of the whole heaven and of earth and of the nature in between; it is also the root of the permanence of mortals, of gods, and of *daimones*.⁴⁰¹

Again, in another fragment of the same work we read:

μορφῶν καὶ ἰδεῶν κράντορα τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἔλεγεν εἶναι καὶ θεῶν
<καὶ> δαιμόνων αἵτιον καὶ τῷ πρεσβίστῳ καὶ κρατιστεύοντι τεχνίτῳ

³⁹⁹ Guthrie, *History of Greek philosophy* 1.198–203; quotation from p. 201. Cf. also Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 62–63 (with references); Rohde, *Psyche* 2.121–31 (on Orphism). For Pythagoreanism, cf. further Iamblichus VP 153, 240; Alexander Polyhistor *Pythagorean Memoirs* ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.25–28 (with the commentary by Delatte, *Vie de Pythagore*, 125–27, 203–4, 213–15); Hippolytus *Haer.* 6.25.4. The date of the source of Alexander Polyhistor's *Pythagorean Memoirs* is disputed; M. Wellmann argued for a date in the 4th century BC ("Eine pythagoreische Urkunde des 4. Jh. v. Chr.," *Hermes* 54 [1919] 225–48), as did Delatte (*Vie de Pythagore*, 198, 232–37). Others are skeptical: A. J. Festugière has demonstrated that the work is a Hellenistic compilation ("Les 'Mémoires pythagoriques' cités par Alexandre Polyhistor," *REG* 58 [1945] 1–65), while Burkert has suggested a 3d century BC date ("Hellenistische Pseudopythagorica," 26–27; idem, *Lore and Science*, 53). Guthrie gives a judicious summary of the different positions taken; though granting the influence of later philosophical terminology, he maintains that these accounts contain elements of genuine early Pythagorean doctrine (*History of Greek Philosophy* 1.201–2 n. 3).

⁴⁰⁰ See Thesleff, *Introduction*, 19, 104–5, 116. The fragments are collected in Thesleff, *Pythagorean Texts*, 164–66. Delatte is more liberal in his assignment of fragments to this writing (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 191–205).

⁴⁰¹ *Hier. log. Dor.* frg. 1, p. 164.9–12 Thesleff = Iamblichus VP 146.

θεῶ κανόνα καὶ λόγον τεχνικόν, νοῦν τε καὶ στάθμαν ἀλκλινεστάταν
τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὑπεῖμεν συστάσιός τε καὶ γενέσιος τῶν πάντων.

He [sc. Pythagoras] said that number brought forth shapes and forms, that it was the cause of gods and *daimones*, a model and principle of design for the eldest and mightiest craftsman god; that number was the design and absolute rule underlying the constitution and generation of everything.⁴⁰²

Number forms the basis not only of the material world, but of the divine sphere as well.⁴⁰³ The second passage also states explicitly that number underlies the *σύστασις* of everything.

We thus find in the passages quoted above indications of a Pythagorean belief in a basic and pervasive constitutive principle, whether it be ‘breath’ or ‘number’—and these two are indeed related in Pythagorean cosmology: by breathing in the void, the undivided universe (the one) becomes divided, which division is the origin of numbers.⁴⁰⁴ However, the particulars of this cosmology do not concern us here; our present passage is too brief and enigmatic (probably deliberately so) to afford definite cosmological conclusions. The author of the *Golden Verses* does not identify the constitutive principle; he merely promises that advanced students will learn what it is and how it functions. *σύστασις* therefore does not *mean* ‘spirit’ or ‘soul’ or ‘breath’ or ‘number,’ but it *refers* to such an underlying essence or principle.

An alternative interpretation would be to take *σύστασις* as ‘connection’ or ‘bond.’ In this case this connection between gods and humans is said to pervade and rule everything. A passage from Plato’s *Gorgias* in which Pythagoreans are cited, may serve to illustrate this notion:

φασὶ δ’ οἱ σοφοὶ ὧ Καλλίκλεις καὶ οὐρανὸν καὶ γῆν καὶ θεοὺς καὶ ἀνθρώπους τὴν κοινωνίαν συνέχειν καὶ φιλίαν καὶ κοσμιότητα καὶ σωφροσύνην καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο διὰ ταῦτα κόσμον καλοῦσιν ὧ ἑταῖρε οὐκ ἀκοσμίαν οὐδὲ ἀκολασίαν. σὺ δέ μοι δοκεῖς οὐ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν τοῦτοις καὶ ταῦτα σοφὸς ὢν ἀλλὰ λεληθέν σε ὅτι ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ καὶ ἐν θεοῖς καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώποις μέγα δύναται.

And the wise men tell us, Callicles, that *heaven and earth and gods and*

⁴⁰² *Hier. log. Dor.* frg. 4, p. 164.28–32 Thesleff = Syrianus in *Arist. Met.*, p. 123.

⁴⁰³ Cf. also *Hier. log. Dor.* frgs. 5, 7, p. 165 Thesleff.

⁴⁰⁴ Cf., e.g., Aristotle *Phys.* 213b22–27, quoted p. 185 above. For a succinct discussion of the evidence see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 28–52, esp. 34–38.

men are held together by communion and friendship, by orderliness, temperance, and justice, and that is the reason, my friend, why they call the whole of this world by the name of order, not of disorder or dissoluteness. Now you, as it seems to me, do not give proper attention to this, for all your cleverness, but have failed to observe the great power of geometrical equality [e.g., 1:2=2:4] amongst both gods and men. (*Grg.* 507e–508a; trans. W. R. M. Lamb, LCL; my emphasis)

A scholiast identified “the wise men” as the Pythagoreans, which has been accepted by most modern scholars.⁴⁰⁵ This passage shares with *GV* 50–51 the notion that the ‘bond’ between gods and men (if such is the meaning of *σύστασις*) holds together and orders the whole universe.⁴⁰⁶ In this case ‘pervades’ (*διέρχεται*) and ‘being ruled’ or ‘being held’ (*κρατεῖται*) take on a more figurative meaning.

Although the phrase ‘immortal gods and mortal men’ is traditional,⁴⁰⁷ it is very appropriate, since what is promised in this part of the *Golden Verses*, is no less than that the student will break through the bonds of his mortality (*GV* 70–71). Knowledge of, and insight into man’s relationship with god implies *per se* progress on the way to salvation.⁴⁰⁸ The notion of a kinship between gods and men is widely diffused in Greco-Roman thought,⁴⁰⁹ and we encounter it again later on in the *Golden Verses* (*GV* 63).

⁴⁰⁵ See, e.g., E. R. Dodds, ed., *Plato: Gorgias* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959) 337–40; Jaap Mansfeld, *Die Vorsokratiker* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987) 199. Burkert is skeptical of the attribution to early Pythagoreanism, but he does appear to allow that it may refer to Archytas and his followers (*Lore and Science*, 77–79).

⁴⁰⁶ Elsewhere in the Pythagorean tradition, the connection between god and man is indicated by very similar terms such as *ὁμολογία* (Aristoxenus ap. Iamblichus *VP* 137); *ὁμιλία* (Anonymus Photii, p. 238.2 Thesleff); *φιλία*, *κοινωνία*, *ἔνωσις*, *θεοκρασία* (Iamblichus *VP* 240; cf. also Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 9.127); *συγγένεια* (Diogenes Laertius 8.27; Apollonius ap. Philostratus *VA* 8.7.7: *ἐστὶ τις ἀνθρώπῳ πρὸς θεὸν συγγένεια, δι’ ἣν μόνον ἴσῳ θεοὺς οἶδε, φιλοσοφεῖ δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ φύσεως καὶ ὅπῃ μετέχει τοῦ θείου*; cf. Seneca *Ep.* 108.19); *συμπαθεία* (Iamblichus *VP* 109).

⁴⁰⁷ It already occurs in Homer *Od.* 24.64: *ἀθάνατοί τε θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ’ ἄνθρωποι*.

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. Heinrich Dörrie, “Gottesbegriff,” *RAC* 11 (1981) 949: “Die Bedeutung der Gotteserkenntnis. Hier muß nochmals daran erinnert werden, daß alle Bemühung um die Erkenntnis Gottes als heilbringend gewertet wurde. Denn jede Erkenntnis setzt eine Gleichartigkeit des Erkennenden mit dem Erkannten voraus, stellt also die heilbringende Teilhabe her.”

⁴⁰⁹ See Édouard des Places, *Syngeneia: La parenté de l’homme avec Dieu d’Homère à la patristique* (Études et commentaires 51; Paris: Klincksieck, 1964); Pépin, *Idées grecques sur l’homme et sur dieu*.

GV 52–53

γνώση δ', ἥ θέμις ἐστί, φύσιν περὶ παντὸς ὁμοίην,
ὥστε σε μήτε ἄελπτ' ἐλπίζειν μήτε τι λήθειν.

You will come to know, as is right, nature, alike in everything,
so that you do not expect what is not to be expected, nor anything es-
cape your notice.

GV 52–53 indicate the second insight the student will gain, namely, an insight into the essence of nature.

52 In GV 52 we are faced once again with textual and other ambiguities, although they are minor ones compared to those in the previous verse. In the first place, there are the variant readings ἥ θέμις ἐστί and ἡ θέμις ἐστί, both acceptable and common idiomatic expressions.⁴¹⁰ Both can be translated 'as is right'; the latter reading has also been interpreted 'in so far as it is allowed.'⁴¹¹ The interpretation 'as is right' would sanction knowledge of nature, while the alternative interpretation would put a restriction on such knowledge. The latter reading and interpretation are defended by Delatte and van der Horst on the grounds that human beings are not capable of fully understanding the divine mysteries of nature.⁴¹² However, further on in the poem the author states that Nature herself reveals *everything* to selected mortals, among whom the student will also find himself (GV 63–65). It is more probable, therefore, that the author would here affirm the possibility *for the student* of acquiring knowledge of nature; with ἥ θέμις ἐστί we thus have to understand σοί.

The next question concerns the precise meaning of φύσιν. For Delatte, it refers to the nature of gods and men; according to this

⁴¹⁰ The former is found in V and cod. Monac. 113, and the Arabic version appears to be based on it as well; it is preferred by Diehl-Young and by Farina. The latter occurs only in lesser manuscripts (Diehl-Young's attribution of this reading to M is evidently an error, since this manuscript accidentally omitted GV 52–53), but it has the support of Iamblichus and Hierocles; this reading is followed by Mullach, Nauck, and van der Horst. For the different expressions see LSJ, s.v. θέμις. The gender of the relative pronoun in the case of the former expression is of course attracted to that of θέμις.

⁴¹¹ Cf. LSJ, s.v. θέμις I. For ἡ θέμις, see also Richardson, *Hymn to Demeter*, 224: "ἡ θέμις ἐστίν ... is used ... to mean 'the done thing' in any situation, but ... usually with reference to institutions and customs subject to some form of divine regulation.... The basic idea underlying it is an 'order of nature' which should not be contravened." For ἡ θέμις, cf. Farina, *Versi aurei*, 42: "com'è giusto"; Köhler, *Hierokles*, 76: "wie recht und billig." Hierocles also interprets the ἡ as ὥς, since he takes ἡ θέμις ἐστί as equivalent to νόμῳ ὥς διάκεινται in GV 1 (in CA 23.6).

⁴¹² Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 62; van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 39–40.

line of interpretation, *ὁμοίην* indicates the uniformity of the nature of the divine.⁴¹³ It is unlikely, however, that *φύσις* would have this specific application without some kind of modifier; its normal, more general denotation, would fit the context better.⁴¹⁴ Furthermore, the *φύσις* mentioned in *GV* 48 and 64 also appears to have a more comprehensive meaning. Although *περὶ παντὸς* usually means 'above all,' it has to mean here 'in everything' or something similar.⁴¹⁵

How to construe *φύσιν περὶ παντὸς ὁμοίην* is another problem. This phrase has been interpreted in at least three ways: (a) *φύσιν περὶ παντὸς ὁμοίην* (sc. *οὔσαν*) forms the *content* of the promised insight (i.e., an accusative and participle construction after *γνώση*), so that the verse can be translated "You will come to know that nature is the same in everything";⁴¹⁶ (b) *φύσιν* forms the object of the verb, with *περὶ παντὸς ὁμοίην* (sc. *οὔσαν*) as a circumstantial participial phrase indicating cause: "You will come to know nature, being the same in everything";⁴¹⁷ or (c) *ὁμοίην* is a predicative adjective with *φύσιν*; the verse can be translated "You will come to know nature (as being) alike in everything."⁴¹⁸ The latter is to be preferred as the one corresponding closest to the text; it is also the most open-ended reading. According to this interpretation, two related insights are in fact promised: insight into nature, and insight into her homogeneity.

The notion of the interrelatedness of all things, that is, of universal sympathy, is a commonplace in Hellenistic-Roman philosophy, but is often specifically connected with Stoicism. However, Plato mentions a doctrine that "all nature is akin" (*τῆς φύσεως ἀπάσης συγγενούς οὔσης*) which he ascribes to "wise men and women," "certain priests and priestesses," his usual way of refer-

⁴¹³ See Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 61–62: "Enfin, il saura, autant que cela est permis, que la nature est à tous points de vue, semblable (à elle-même, c.-à-d. unique).... La *Φύσις* dont il est question dans ce fragment est évidemment la Nature des dieux et des hommes."

⁴¹⁴ Cf. also van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 37–39.

⁴¹⁵ For the usual meaning, see LSJ, s.v. *πᾶς* D.IV. A meaning like the one indicated is also required in Plato *Grg.* 467d and in 3 *Jn* 2; see Bauer-Aland, s.v. *περί* 1e.

⁴¹⁶ Cf. Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 61; Méautis, *Sagesse pythagoricienne*, 34; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 42; van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 151. The participle of *εἶμι* is often omitted in constructions like this; see Kühner-Gerth §§ 483, 491.

⁴¹⁷ Cf. van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 37–39.

⁴¹⁸ Cf. Hierocles in *CA* 23.6 (*τὴν φύσιν τὴν περὶ παντὸς ὁμοίην*); Mullach, *FPG* 1.197; Schröder, "Nobele geest," 105; Évola, *Versi d'oro*, 63.

ring to either Pythagoreans or Orphics.⁴¹⁹ On this doctrine he bases the following conclusion: ἅτε γὰρ τῆς φύσεως ἀπάσης συγγενοῦς οὔσης, ... οὐδὲν κωλύει ἔν μόνον ἀναμνησθέντα, ὃ δὴ μάθῃσιν καλοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι, τὰλλα πάντα αὐτὸν ἀνευρεῖν (“For as all nature is akin, ... there is no reason why we should not, by remembering but one single thing—an act which men call learning—discover everything else”; Plato *Meno* 81cd; trans. W. R. M. Lamb, LCL). Leaving Plato’s doctrine of recollection aside, the idea that the kinship of nature allows one to arrive at insight into nature as a whole by starting at a single known point, is precisely that on which GV 52 is based as well.⁴²⁰ The train of thought is clearly this: Through your efforts to purify your soul, you will gain insight into that which unites you with the gods, that is, your true nature. From this, you will understand nature as a whole, since nature is the same everywhere, and like is known by like.⁴²¹

It is clear from the way the promise is made that insight into nature is not something one can take for granted; there is a mystery involved that needs initiation and revelation (cf. GV 64 and the commentary to GV 47–48a above). On the other hand, even mathematical studies (including astronomy and music) were considered an aid to gain insight into the mystery of nature.⁴²²

53 The consequence of the knowledge gained will be that the student will not have false expectations, nor will he be unaware of anything relating to him. Insight into nature circumscribes what is possible; it means insight into the probable outcome of events, as well as insight into the true source of his happiness, namely, his connection with the divine world. This insight, in turn, will give the student peace of mind and moral steadfastness, since he will not be tempted to chase after vain hopes, nor be depressed by

⁴¹⁹ For the Pythagorean origin of this doctrine, see Dodds, *Gorgias*, 337.

⁴²⁰ On universal kinship of nature in Pythagoreanism, see Guthrie, *History of Greek philosophy* 1.186–87, 200–2, 208–9. Van der Horst sees here a reference to the doctrine of the harmony of the world based on numbers and numeric relations, and cites Philolaus frgs. 1, 6, 7, 11 DK in support (*Vers d’or*, 37–39).

⁴²¹ That like is known by like was a philosophical commonplace from the 5th century BC onward; it was also specifically professed by Empedocles. Cf. Empedocles frg. 109 DK = frg. 77 Wright; Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.209–11. In this context we may also compare Anonymus Photii 440b, p. 240.29–30 Thesleff: τὸ δὲ γινῶναι ἑαυτὸν οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τὴν τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου φύσιν γινῶναι.

⁴²² Cf. Porphyry VP 46–47; Iamblichus VP 31, 228. In the latter passage Iamblichus speaks of the “mathematical mystery rites” (τῶν μαθηματικῶν ὁργασμῶν).

false fears.⁴²³ As we shall see in the next verses, moral instability and unhappiness are the lot of those without such insight.⁴²⁴ We find here therefore a recurrence of the topos encountered in *GV* 14–16, namely, that of insight into the human condition and the limitations to which it is subjected.

Interestingly enough, a fragment attributed to the ‘Orphic’ poet Linus contains a statement that appears to be the exact opposite of *GV* 53:

ἐλπεσθαι χρηὶ πάντ’, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔστ’ οὐδὲν ἄελπτον·
ῥᾳδία πάντα θεῷ τελέσαι καὶ ἀνήνυτον οὐδέν.

Everything is to be expected; nothing is surprising:⁴²⁵
everything is easy for god to do, nothing is impossible.⁴²⁶

What makes this fragment even more intriguing is Iamblichus’ surmise that it was actually written by Pythagoreans.⁴²⁷

The Linus fragment seems to reflect an optimistic view of the world, a faith in the omnipotence of god; since god can do anything, nothing is impossible. This, at least, is how Iamblichus interprets the fragment.⁴²⁸ On the other hand, the first verse of the fragment is also very similar to a fragment of Euripides:

ἄελπτον οὐδέν, πάντα δ’ ἐλπίζειν χρεών.

⁴²³ On the topos of hope, vain and otherwise, cf. the material collected in Stobaeus 4.46–47.

⁴²⁴ A very similar attitude toward false expectations is articulated in Vettius Valens *Anthologiae* 5.6.9 Pringee (= 5.9 Kroll), except that for him they are expelled by applying oneself to the study of astrology, and not by insight into nature in general: “But whoever takes the trouble to learn about the future [i.e., the forecasts of astrology] and to know the truth will possess his soul in freedom from this servitude [to Chance and to Hope], disregarding Chance and assigning no importance to Hope, not fearing death and living without distraction, having disciplined his soul to courage, and neither rejoicing over good fortune nor depressed by misfortune, but giving himself contentedly to the present. *Since he does not long for things beyond his reach*, he bears what is decreed for him with self-discipline and, renouncing both pleasures and penalties, becomes a good soldier of Fate” (trans. Frederick C. Grant, *Hellenistic Religions: The Age of Syncretism* [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953] 60–62; emphasis added). *GV* 53 is indeed interpreted by Iamblichus as referring to the benefits of astrological insights (*Protr.* 3, p. 12.1–7).

⁴²⁵ Literally: ‘not to be expected.’

⁴²⁶ Linus frg. 9; trans. West, *Orphic Poems*, 60.

⁴²⁷ Iamblichus *VP* 139. See chap. 8, n. 33 above on the connections between the Linus fragment and the *Golden Verses*.

⁴²⁸ Cf. Iamblichus *VP* 139: οὐ γὰρ εἶναι τὰ μὲν δυνατὰ τοῖς θεοῖς, τὰ δὲ ἀδυνατὰ, ... ἀλλὰ πάντα δυνατὰ. He then quotes the Linus fragment.

Nothing is surprising; one should expect everything. (frg. 761 Nauck)

From what we know of Euripides' extant works, this verse is more likely to express an attitude of pessimism concerning the uncertainty of human life, rather than the optimism of Linus.⁴²⁹ Compared to Linus and Euripides, the author of the *Golden Verses* takes a middle position: one should neither pessimistically fear the unexpected occurrence of misfortunes, nor optimistically hope for miracles. One may face the future with a calm assurance based on one's knowledge of nature, instead.

GV 54–60

γνώση δ' ἀνθρώπους ἀνθαίρετα πῆματ' ἔχοντας
τλήμονας, οὔτ' ἀγαθῶν πέλας ὄντων οὔτ' ἐσορῶσιν
οὔτε κλύουσι, λύσιν δὲ κακῶν παῦροι συνιᾶσιν.
τοίη μοῖρ' αὐτῶν βλάπτει φρένας· ὥς δὲ κύλινδροι
ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλα φέρονται ἀπείρονα πῆματ' ἔχοντες.
λυγρὰ γὰρ συνοπαδὸς Ἔρις βλάπτουσα λεληθεν
σύμφυτος, ἣν οὐ δεῖ προάγειν, εἴκοντα δὲ φεύγειν.

You will come to know that the miseries men suffer are self-incurred, the wretched people, who do not see the good even though it is near, nor do they hear it. Few understand the deliverance from their troubles. Such is the fate that harms their minds: like tumbling stones they are borne hither and thither, suffering endless miseries. For a deadly innate⁴³⁰ companion, Discord, has injured them unawares. This one must not promote,⁴³¹ but withdraw⁴³² and flee from it.

The third question into which the student will gain insight, is that of the cause of suffering. Unlike the two previous questions, this topic is developed at some length, and more specific answers are given than was the case with the previous two. GV 54–60 contain,

⁴²⁹ In Euripides' view, human beings are subject to unexpected turns of events, to the caprice of fate. In the endings of five of his extant plays (*Bacchae*, *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Helena*, *Medea*) reference is made to the role played by the 'unexpected'; cf. *Bacch.* 1388–91: πολλὰ μορφὰ τῶν δαιμονίων, / πολλὰ δ' ἀεπτῶς κραινοῦσι θεοί· / καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη, / τῶν δ' ἀδοκῆτων πόρον ἦνρε θεός. See on the 'unexpected' also Karl Reinhardt, "Zum Epigramm auf die Gefallenen von Koroneia," *Hermes* 73 (1938) 234–37; A. Cameron, "An Epigram of the Fifth Century B.C.," *HThR* 33 (1940) 97–130; des Places, *Religion grecque*, 125.

⁴³⁰ For this meaning, see LSJ, s.v. σύμφυτος 1; cf. also Plato *Resp.* 609a (ξύμφυντον κακόν); *Pol.* 272e (ξύμφυντος ἐπιθυμία). Van der Horst prefers 'joined together' (*Vers d'or*, 48).

⁴³¹ For this meaning of προάγω, see LSJ, s.v., I.2c, 5.

⁴³² See LSJ, s.v. εἴκω I.2.

in fact, a minor theodicy. Suffering is due, basically, to lack of insight. Man himself is responsible for his own suffering, since he does not perceive what constitutes his good, nor does he understand how to escape evil. He is thus subject to a moral instability which, like a cancer, progressively destroys him from within. From this one should try to escape.

The fact that this question is the last of the three introduced by *γνώσεαι* and/or *γνώση*, the considerably greater length devoted to it, and the relative explicitness of the discussion, all indicate that this topic is, according to the compositional 'rule of growing members,' the most important of the three.⁴³³ It is not surprising that the consequences of a lack of insight receive more attention than our relationship with god or nature, since this is in complete accord with the predominantly negative or preventive ethics of the poem (cf. especially *GV* 25–39).

54 Mankind is responsible for its own suffering; the responsibility cannot be laid at god's door—such is surely the implication of *GV* 54.⁴³⁴ We are reminded of the prophet's assertion in the myth of Er at the end of Plato's *Republic*: αἰτία ἐλομένου· θεὸς ἀν-αίτιος ("The blame is his who chooses: God is blameless").⁴³⁵ According to this myth, the happiness of human beings depends ultimately on the choice of life they made before incarnation. For the author of the *Golden Verses* the cause of happiness or its opposite is more straightforward, namely, insight or the lack thereof.

55–56 Most men are morally blind; they do not recognize the good in order to choose it, even though it is at hand, nor do they know how to be saved from evil. Both in terms of form and in

⁴³³ See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, § 451 (quoted n. 329 above).

⁴³⁴ For the expression 'self-incurred suffering,' cf. the references in LSJ, s.v. αὐθαίρετος. To these we may add Euripides frg. 1026 Nauck = Menander *Sent.* 758: τὰ πλείστα θνητοῖς τῶν κακῶν αὐθαίρετα.

⁴³⁵ Plato *Resp.* 617e. Thus also Dragona-Monachou, "ᾠμνος στὸ Δία," 358. This doctrine may have an Orphic origin; see Hans Dieter Betz, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre in Greek and Hellenistic Literature: The Case of the Oracle of Trophonius," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (ed. David Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983) 588 n. 88. The saying was often quoted or adapted; cf., e.g., Justin *Apol.* 44.8; Porphyry *Marc.* 12; Sextus *Sent.* 114 = Clitarchus 19: κακῶν θεὸς ἀναίτιος; *Corp. Herm.* 4.8: ὁ μὲν θεὸς ἀναίτιος, ἡμεῖς δὲ αἴτιοι τῶν κακῶν, ταῦτα προκρίνοντες τῶν ἀγαθῶν; Iamblichus *VP* 218: οἱ θεοὶ τῶν κακῶν εἰσιν ἀναίτιοι. For its influence on later authors, including Christians, see Schröder, "Fatum (Heimarmene)," 531–33. Cf. also Homer *Od.* 1.32–34; Bacchylides 15.51–52; Democritus frg. 175 DK; Jas 1:13–15.

content this kind of “derogatory address to mankind by a deity or prophet was traditional in both Greek and Jewish literature.”⁴³⁶ However, as we have seen in chapter 5 (pp. 51–53 above) the formulation in GV 55–56 indicates a specifically Orphic origin.

The proximity of the good (ἀγαθῶν πέλας ὄντων), I think, implies that the source of man’s real happiness is to be found in himself;⁴³⁷ it depends on his inherent kinship with god and with nature (GV 50–53). What foolish people fail to perceive, is the kind of relationships in which man is involved, and which determine his being and purpose. Since the majority of human beings do not understand these relationships, they do not know how to be delivered from their troubles.⁴³⁸ The idea of deliverance is an important one in the *Golden Verses*, since it occurs four times (GV 56, 61, 66, 68). In GV 61 the author states explicitly that deliverance from evil, and consequently also happiness, depends on our relationship with the deity.⁴³⁹

That there are only a few with true understanding (παῦροι συνῶσιν), true faith, and so forth, are expressions of religious elitism often encountered in sectarian groups. In this context the Orphic saying, πολλοὶ μὲν ναρθηκοφόροι, βάκχοι δέ τε παῦροι (“The thyrsus-bearers are many, but the mystics few”), comes to mind.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁶ Richardson, *Hymn to Demeter*, 243 (with many references). For passages with a content similar to the *Golden Verses*, cf. Isa 6:9–10 (often quoted in the New Testament; cf. Matt 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; John 12:40; Acts 28:26–27); *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 256–57; Parmenides frg. 6.4–9 DK; Empedocles frgs. 2, 124 DK = frgs. 1, 114 Wright; Orphic frg. 233 Kern; Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 2.14.19–20; *Corp. Herm.* 1.27–28.

⁴³⁷ For the role of the ‘proximity’ of knowledge regarding salvation in the New Testament, cf. Acts 17:27; Rom 1:19–20, 10:5–13.

⁴³⁸ Cf. Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 2.24.19: ὁ ἀγνοῶν, τίς ἐστι καὶ ἐπὶ τί γέγονεν καὶ ἐν τίνι τούτῳ κόσμῳ καὶ μετὰ τίνων κοινωνῶν καὶ τίνα τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἐστι καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ τὰ αἰσχροῦ, καὶ μήτε λόγῳ παρακολουθῶν μήτ’ ἀποδείξει, μήτε τί ἐστιν ἀληθὲς ἢ τί ψεῦδος, μήτε διακρίνει ταῦτα δυνάμενος οὔτ’ ὀρέζεται κατὰ φύσιν οὔτ’ ἐκκλινεῖ οὔθ’ ὁρμήσει οὔτ’ ἐπιβαλεῖται, οὐ συγκαταθήσεται, οὐκ ἀνανεύσει, οὐκ ἐφέξει, τὸ σύνολον κωφὸς καὶ τυφλὸς περιελεύσεται δοκῶν μὲν τις εἶναι, ὧν δ’ οὐδεὶς (“The man who does not know who he is, and what he is born for, and what sort of a world this is that he exists in, and whom he shares it with; and does not know what the good things are and what are the evil, what the noble and what the base; and is unable to follow either reason or demonstration, or what is true and what is false, and cannot distinguish one from the other; and will manifest neither desire, nor aversion, nor choice, nor purpose in accordance with nature; will not assent, will not dissent, will not withhold judgement—such a man, to sum it all up, will go about deaf and blind, thinking that he is somebody, when he really is nobody”; trans. W. A. Oldfather, LCL; my emphasis).

⁴³⁹ Cf. also Menander *Sent.* 354: θεῶ προσεύχου πημάτων λαβεῖν λύσιν.

⁴⁴⁰ Orphic frg. 5 Kern; first cited in Plato *Phd.* 69c. According to Plato this statement is

‘Blindness’ denotes an incapability to perceive what is good *by oneself*, while ‘deafness’ refers to an unwillingness to be taught *by others*;⁴⁴¹ they are common metaphors for a lack of moral understanding.⁴⁴² Porphyry states that the Pythagoreans had as main goal to free the mind (νοῦς) from the bonds shackling it, since according to them “‘the mind sees all and hears all, but the rest are deaf and blind’” (‘νοῦς ... πάνθ’ ὁρᾷ καὶ πάντ’ ἀκούει, τᾶλλα δὲ κωφὰ καὶ τυφλά’).⁴⁴³ According to *GV* 57, spiritual blindness is a result of injury to the mind (βλάπτει φρένας).

57a Mortals suffer from mental blindness as a consequence of their fate.⁴⁴⁴ The author seems to evoke the traditional wisdom that “when god prepares evil for a man, he first injures his mind” (ὅταν ὁ δαίμων ἀνδρὶ πορσύνῃ κακὰ, τὸν νοῦν ἔβλαψε πρῶτον; frg. adesgota 455 Nauck).

When the gods decided to destroy or punish a man, they simply disturbed his intellect, making him ignorant of good and evil.... This cruel mechanism, by which a man is led to intellectual and moral blindness, was labelled by the old term ἄτη.⁴⁴⁵

However, μοῖρα does not here denote a divine agency, but rather

also applicable to true philosophers. Cf. also Matt 22:14.

⁴⁴¹ Cf. Hesiod *Op.* 293–97 (quoted p. 152 above); Iamblichus *VP* 49. A similar interpretation is found in Hierocles in *CA* 24.10–11.

⁴⁴² Cf., e.g., Isa 6:9–10; Parmenides frgs. 6, 7 DK; Empedocles frg. 2.6–7 DK = frg. 1.6–7 Wright; Democritus frg. 175 DK; Pindar *Nem.* 7.23–24; Plato *Resp.* 506c, 518c; *Phdr.* 270e; *Grg.* 479b; and esp. Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 2.24.19 (quoted n. 438 above), 3.22.26: ἰὼ ἄνθρωποι, ποῖ φέρεσθε; τί ποιείτε, ὦ ταλαίπωροι; ὡς τυφλοὶ ἄνω καὶ κάτω κυλίσθε· ἄλλην ὁδὸν ἀπέρχεσθε τὴν οὖσαν ἀπολελοιπότες, ἀλλαχοῦ ζητεῖτε τὸ εὖρον καὶ τὸ εὐδαιμονικόν, ὅπου οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδ’ ἄλλου δεικνύοντος πιστεύετε. See in general Wolfgang Schrage, “τυφλός κτλ,” *TDNT* 8.270–94, esp. 275–79; Erna Lesky, “Blindheit,” *RAC* 2 (1954) 442: “Sehr häufig wird das Bild der B[lindheit] auf verschiedene geistige u. seelische Zustände angewendet. Besonders gern wird der Zustand der Unwissenheit (ἄγνοια) mit der B[lindheit] verglichen.”

⁴⁴³ Porphyry *VP* 46 = Iamblichus *VP* 228. The quotation is of course Epicharmus frg. 12 DK. In his commentary on this passage, Iamblichus also alludes to this saying (*Protr.* 3, p. 13.7–8). According to both Porphyry and Iamblichus, the ‘eyes of the mind’ are purified and trained by mathematical and astronomical studies, by means of which the mind is brought into contact with things ‘akin’ (ὁμοφύλων) to itself (Porphyry *VP* 46–47; Iamblichus *VP* 228; cf. also Iamblichus *VP* 31).

⁴⁴⁴ For the expression, cf. Pindar *Nem.* 7.60: σύνεσιν οὐκ ἀποβλάπτει (sc. Μοῖρα) φρενῶν; Homer *Od.* 14.178.

⁴⁴⁵ Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 33, citing Theognis 402–6. The *locus classicus* is Homer *Il.* 19.86–94, where Agamemnon tries to justify his quarrel with Achilles, which caused the Greek so much trouble.

indicates the logical and necessary consequence of a way of life in which moral insight is not practiced.⁴⁴⁶ The *μοῖρα* is therefore described in the comparison that follows: if human beings do not attend to the aspect of divinity within themselves, they are set on a way of life that injures their faculty of judgment and understanding.⁴⁴⁷ The reading *μοῖρ' ἀντῶν* (V) is therefore preferable to the variant *μοῖρα βροτῶν* (M), since we are not here concerned with the fate of mortals in general, but with that of the people without insight referred to in the preceding sentence.

57b–58 Neither of the transmitted readings for GV 57b (*οἱ δὲ κυλίνδροις* V; *οἱ δὲ κύλινδροι* M) makes much sense. Since GV 57b–58 are clearly meant as a comparison, a simple emendation such as *ὡς δὲ κύλινδροι* seems the best solution.⁴⁴⁸ *κύλινδροι* here means ‘tumbling stones,’ that is, boulders rolling down a mountain slope, as Vollgraff has demonstrated.⁴⁴⁹ Once these boulders have come loose and started their downward journey, there is no controlling them. They are carried this way and that by the force of their momentum; they have no specific direction or purpose.⁴⁵⁰

The author uses this simile to describe the fate of those people who lack insight into what is good or evil. Since they have no criterion to apply in choosing between actions and goals, they are carried from one extreme to the other, completely subject to external influences; they suffer endless misfortunes, just as rolling boulders are damaged by collisions against other stones without being able to prevent them.⁴⁵¹ This is all due to a lack of moral

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. Eitrem, “Schicksalsmächte,” 64: “Die *μοῖρα* [kann] auch das Endergebnis, die notwendig sich ergebende logische Konsequenz einer Tat oder eines Lebens einschließen, wie bei Neophron frg. 3,3 (Medeia vor der Leiche Iasons, der sich erhängt hat): *τοῖα σε μοῖρα σῶν κακῶν ἔργων μένει*—eine ‘solche Moira’ war sozusagen vorauszusehen.”

⁴⁴⁷ For the notion of blinding the eye of the mind through one’s own way of life, cf. Plutarch *De superst.* 5.167b (through atheism); Iamblichus *VP* 31 (through ‘other cares’); and probably also Matt 6:19–24 (through avarice). In the case of the latter passage, a different interpretation that excludes the notion of ‘the eye of the soul’ is given by Betz, *Essays*, 86. Plutarch defines the eye of the mind as ‘the conception of god’ (*τῇν τοῦ θεοῦ νόησιν*). For this passage, see Morton Smith, “*De Superstitione* (*Moralia* 164E–171F),” in *Plutarch’s Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (ed. Hans Dieter Betz; SCHNT 3; Leiden: Brill, 1975) 20. Proclus Arabus also sees in GV 55 an allusion to the eye of the soul (in *CA* f. 110^v).

⁴⁴⁸ See the critical apparatus to the text.

⁴⁴⁹ Vollgraff, “*De lapide cylindro*”; discussed on pp. 54–55 above.

⁴⁵⁰ For the expression *ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλα*, cf. Homer *Il.* 15.684; Krause, *ΑΛΛΟΤΕ ΑΛΛΟΣ*, 43.

⁴⁵¹ For Chrysippus’ interpretation of this simile, see pp. 54–55 above.

purpose and stability.⁴⁵²

The author has now returned to his starting point in *GV* 54: the suffering of human beings is self-incurred, since it is due to their own instability. This conclusion is emphasized by the use of *epiphora* in *GV* 54 and 57 (πήματ' ἔχοντας; πήματ' ἔχοντες). The 'endless miseries' these people suffer contrast sharply with the limited suffering Moira imposes on the good (*GV* 20).

59–60 The motif of instability is explored further in *GV* 59–60. Moral incoherence is here personified as Ἐρις, Discord.⁴⁵³ Discord denotes an internal tug-of-war between man's moral sense and his desires, which, if allowed to continue unchecked, causes irreparable harm. It is the more insidious in that man is often unaware of the existence of, and damage done by this 'deadly companion,'⁴⁵⁴ so intertwined has it become with his own nature. Elsewhere, ἔρις usually refers to strife between human beings, or between man and god.⁴⁵⁵ In the philosophies of Heraclitus and Empedocles, strife is one of the basic principles of nature.⁴⁵⁶ Here, however, 'inborn discord' has to indicate an intrahuman struggle which causes man to deviate from a straight and steady course.⁴⁵⁷ This internal conflict is also implied by the Pythagorean

⁴⁵² It is remarkable how often natural forces (usually wind or water or a combination of both) are used as metaphors in descriptions of moral instability; cf. Epicurus ap. Diogenes Laertius 10.128, 137 (storm); Seneca *Ep.* 95.57–58 (currents); Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 13.13 (whirlpool); Proclus *Hymn* 4.10 Abel (waves); Ps 1:4–5 (wind); Matt 7:24–27 (storm); Eph 4:14 (waves, wind); Jas 1:5–8 (waves); *Teachings of Silvanus* 90.10–17 (wind, horse without rider).

⁴⁵³ For the personification of ἔρις see LSJ, s.v., III. According to Hesiod *Theog.* 225, Ἐρις was the daughter of Night. Cf. also Orphic frg. 247.14 Kern.

⁴⁵⁴ The adjective λυγρός ('deadly') is often encountered with νεῖκος, a synonym for ἔρις; cf. Empedocles frg. 109.3 DK = frg. 77.3 Wright; Pindar *Nem.* 8.25.

⁴⁵⁵ For Hierocles, it denotes here opposition to god (*in CA* 24.17); so also van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 41, 43.

⁴⁵⁶ Both Proclus Arabus and Hierocles refer to Empedocles in their interpretation of this passage (Proclus Arab *in CA* f. 110v; Hierocles *in CA* 24.2–3).

⁴⁵⁷ So also Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 66–67; cf. Iamblichus *Protr.* 3, pp. 13.23–14.17. Cf. in general Plato's myth of the two horses (moderation and desire) straining against each other (*Phdr.* 246a, 253d–254e). Plutarch uses this same image to describe the struggle (διαφορὰν καὶ στάσιν) in the soul between reason and desire (*De virt. mor.* 445c, 446f–447c). In *De gen.* 591d–592c he attributes the wavering and confused movements of some souls to the fact that the δαίμων (which he equates with the νοῦς) attached to such a soul is unable to control the refractory desires of the soul. See on this latter passage Donald A. Stoikey, "De Genio Socratis (*Moralia* 575A–598F)," in *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (ed. Hans Dieter Betz; SCHNT 3; Leiden: Brill, 1975) 236–85, esp. 278–79; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 212–14. The theme of 'inner conflict' is an ancient one, with many ramifications; see Gerd Theissen, *Psychological*

exhortation “not to tear apart the god within you” (μὴ διασπᾶν τὸν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς θεόν). Iamblichus cites this precept in support of a universal, all-encompassing friendship (φιλία), which would be the opposite of ἔρις.⁴⁵⁸ According to another Pythagorean saying, “man should become one” (ἕνα γενέσθαι καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον δεῖν).⁴⁵⁹

Ἔρις is identified with μοῖρα by having the same predicate attached to it; both are said to harm people (βλάπτει, GV 57; βλάπτουσα, GV 59). Discord encapsulates the fate of people without insight. Human beings unaware (λεληθεν) of the harm done by discord are people without insight into nature—their own and that of the universe—since then they would not have lacked awareness (cf. μήτε τι λήθειν, GV 53). Discord forms the antithesis to the union between god and man (GV 50–51) and to the homogeneity of nature in which man participates (GV 52–53). Such discord is to be avoided, not promoted. The relative pronoun ἣν in GV 60 is the object of both προάγειν and φεύγειν, with an assumed indefinite ‘one’ or ‘you’ (agreeing with εἰκοντα) as subject of both infinitives: “You should not promote discord, but withdraw and flee (from it).”⁴⁶⁰

We are now in a position to take a final look at the composition of GV 50–60. This section of the *Golden Verses* appears to be structured with care. It is divided into three subsections by the repetition of the future of γινώσκω (GV 50, 52, 54). Each subsection has a definite topic (σύστασις, GV 51; φύσις, GV 52; suffering, GV 54–60a) with specific consequences (cf. GV 51, 53, 60bc). The latter are each time expressed by means of two balanced clauses (ἥ τε ἕκαστα διέρχεται, ἥ τε κρατεῖται; ὥστε σε

Aspects of Pauline Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 211–21. Cf., e.g., Ovid *Met.* 7.19; Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 2.26.1, 2, 4; in early Christian literature, cf. Rom 7:14–25; Gal 5:17; Jas 4:1; 1 Pet 2:11; Ignatius *Eph.* 8.1. See also the discussion of Iamblichus VP 229 in Thom, “Topos of Friendship.”

⁴⁵⁸ Iamblichus VP 240. The precept alludes to the Orphic doctrine of the tearing apart of Dionysus by the Titans; ‘the god within’ therefore refers to the divine (Dionysiac) element in man which is under constant attack by the Titanic element. See Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*, 155–56, 177–78.

⁴⁵⁹ Ap. Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* 4.151. Cf. also Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 67. In Paul we find comparable doctrines concerning the unity of the human being; cf. 1 Thess 5:23.

⁴⁶⁰ For fleeing from a vice, cf. Cleobulus ap. Diogenes Laertius 1.92; Zaleucus *Prooem.* frg. 3, p. 227.15–16 Thesleff; 1 Cor 6:18, 10:14; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22; more references in Bauer-Aland, s.v. φεύγω 3. Withdrawal (from false teachings) is also advised in GV 24.

μήτε ἄελπτ' ἐλπίζειν μήτε τι λήθειν; ἦν οὐ δεῖ προάγειν, εἵκοντα δὲ φεύγειν). At the same time we find the rhetorical device of similar verse-endings forming an *abba* pattern (λήθειν, *GV* 53; πήματ' ἔχοντα, *GV* 54; πήματ' ἔχοντες, *GV* 58; λέληθεν, *GV* 59), which cuts across subsection borders and underlines the unity of this section.

After the enumeration of the various insights to be gained, the author concludes the section on metaphysical questions with a prayer (*GV* 61–62) and an encouragement (*GV* 63–64).

GV 61–62

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ πολλῶν κε κακῶν λύσειας ἅπαντας,
εἰ πᾶσιν δείξαις, οἷψ τῷ δαίμονι χρώνται.

Father Zeus, you would surely deliver all from many evils,
if you would show all what kind of *daimon* they have.

Having indicated the basic cause of human suffering (*GV* 54–60), the author turns to the solution: men could be spared much suffering, if only Zeus would reveal to them the nature of their δαίμων! Although the prayer expressing this pious wish is serious enough, it is also a rhetorical device, an *apostrophe*. The surprising change in addressee has the pathetic function of engaging the student's interest in what is said; it serves to pinpoint and underline the basis of true happiness, namely, insight into one's δαίμων.⁴⁶¹

What the author means by δαίμων is less clear. There are at least four possibilities: (a) δαίμων as fate, (b) the personal δαίμων, (c) δαίμων as soul, and (d) the νοῦς-δαίμων.⁴⁶² In the first place then, the term δαίμων is often used synonymously with 'fate.' This meaning is as early as Homer, as is witnessed by the frequency of expressions like σὺν δαίμονι, πρὸς δαίμονα, κατὰ δαίμονα, and so on.⁴⁶³ A second, related meaning is that of the personal δαίμων, a personification of one's fate, a divine force determining what happens to man beyond his own planning or un-

⁴⁶¹ For this device, see Lausberg, *Handbuch*, § 762.

⁴⁶² For a discussion of the different possibilities, see also Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 68–69; van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 49–53; idem, "ΔΑΙΜΩΝ," *Mnemosyne*, 3d ser. 10 (1941) 61–68. These two authors classify the various meanings in a manner slightly different from my own. See further Marcel Detienne, "Sur la démonologie de l'ancien pythagorisme," *RHR* 155 (1959) 17–32; idem, 'Daîmôn' dans le pythagorisme, esp. the classification of the texts collected in the appendix, pp. 171–77.

⁴⁶³ See Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* 1.217; Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*, 58 n. 80. Cf. also Suda, s.v. δαίμων: ἡ ἐκάστου τύχη.

derstanding. Whether man prospers or not is something outside his control; it depends on his *δαίμων*. A prosperous man has a good *δαίμων*, he is *εὐδαίμων* (fortunate); an unfortunate man has a bad *δαίμων* and is therefore *κακοδαίμων*. An early example of this view is provided by Theognis:

πολλοί τοι χρώνται δειλαῖς φρεσί, δαίμονι δ' ἐσθλῶ,
οἷς τὸ κακὸν δοκεόν γίνεται εἰς ἀγαθόν.
εἰσὶν δ' οἱ βουλῇ τ' ἀγαθῇ καὶ δαίμονι δειλῶ
μοχθίζουσι, τέλος δ' ἔργμασιν οὐχ ἔπεται.

Many, for sure, have vile wits and a good fortune, and to these that which seemeth evil turneth to good; and some there be that labour under good counsel and vile fortune, and the end cometh not to what they do. (Theognis 161–64; trans. J. M. Edmonds, LCL)

According to Plato, this *δαίμων* is a special being assigned by lot to each individual at his birth to watch over him and guide him.⁴⁶⁴ This notion was very influential in the later tradition, but certainly antedates Plato. It is already found in Phocylides (6th century BC):

ἀλλ' ἄρα δαίμονές εἰσιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν ἄλλοτε ἄλλοι,
οἱ μὲν ἐπερχομένου κακοῦ ἀνέρας ἐκλύσασθαι ...

But there must be spirits in the world, now these and now those, some <wont> to save men from coming ill ... (frg. 16 Diehl = frg. 15 Edmonds; trans. Edmonds, LCL)

Later Menander was to speak of the *δαίμων* assigned to every person as his *μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου* ('guide in the mysteries of life').⁴⁶⁵

The last two meanings that concern us relate the *δαίμων* to the divine part in man. *δαίμων* could thus refer to the soul itself. For Empedocles the soul is a divine being, a *δαίμων*, exiled to live in

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. *Phd.* 107d; *Resp.* 617de, 620de; *Tim.* 90a–c. Iamblichus interprets the *δαίμων* of GV 62 in this manner (*Protr.* 3, p. 15.1–7).

⁴⁶⁵ Menander frg. 714 Körte and Thierfelder = frg. 550 Kock. For *δαίμων* as fate and the notion of a personal *δαίμων*, see Rohde, *Psyche* 2.316–18n; Foerster, "*δαίμων*," *TDNT* 2.2–3; Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* 1.216–22, 2.210–13; Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*, 42–43; des Places, *Religion grecque*, 113–17; Colpe et al., "Geister (Dämonen)," 605–6, 610; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 180–81. See also the literature cited in n. 48 above. From the many other references to a personal *δαίμων*, cf. Hesiod *Op.* 314; Epicharmus frg. 17 DK; Heraclitus frg. 119 DK; Pindar *Pyth.* 3.108–9, 5.122–23. For this meaning in Pythagorean material, cf. Aristoxenus frg. 41 Wehrli; Zaleucus *Prooem.* frg. 3, p. 227.14–20 Thesleff; Plutarch *De gen.* 585f–586a.

the body as a consequence of some wrongdoing and of “trusting in raving Strife.”⁴⁶⁶ Some Pythagoreans also considered souls δαίμονες. According to the account by Alexander Polyhistor, “the whole air is full of souls [ψυχῶν], and these are called δαίμονες and heroes.... People are fortunate [εὐδαιμονεῖν] when they have acquired a good soul [ἀγαθὴ ψυχῇ].”⁴⁶⁷ This meaning is combined in the later tradition with the second to produce the notion of the νοῦς-δαίμων, which is the divine part of the soul that serves as man’s guide. We find this latter meaning among Stoics and later Platonists,⁴⁶⁸ but it is already intimated in Plato (*Tim.* 90a) and there is some evidence for a ‘Pythagorean’ usage as well.⁴⁶⁹ This meaning seems too sophisticated for our present context, but it cannot be ruled out completely.⁴⁷⁰

The context demands that the meaning we assign to δαίμων be such that it becomes clear how insight into the nature of the

⁴⁶⁶ Cf. Empedocles frg. 107 Wright = frg. 115 DK. See also Rohde, *Psyche* 2.171–87; Detienne, ‘*Daimôn*’ dans le pythagorisme, 98–99; Wright, *Empedocles*, 69–76.

⁴⁶⁷ Alexander Polyhistor ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.32. Cf. Plutarch *Quaest. Rom.* 266e: ἡ ὧς Κάστωρ λέγει τὰ Ῥωμαϊκὰ τοῖς Πυθαγορικοῖς συνοικεῖν, τὸν ἐν ἡμῖν δαίμονα δεῖσθαι τῶν ἐκτὸς θεῶν καὶ ἱκετεύειν, τῇ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐπικαλύψει τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς αἰνιττόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἐγκάλυψιν καὶ ἀπόκρυψιν. See also Rohde, *Psyche* 2.158–70, esp. 161–62; Detienne, ‘*Daimôn*’ dans le pythagorisme, 60–92; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 73–74, 185–86.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Posidonius frg. 187.4–13 Edelstein and Kidd = frg. 417 Theiler = Galen *De Plac. Hipp. et Plat.* 5.469 Kühn: τὸ δὴ τῶν παθῶν αἴτιον, τουτέστι τῆς τε ἀνομολογίας καὶ τοῦ κακοδαίμονος βίου, τὸ μὴ κατὰ πᾶν ἔπεσθαι τῷ ἐν αὐτῷ δαίμονι συγγενεῖ τε ὄντι καὶ τὴν ὁμοίαν φύσιν ἔχοντι τῷ τὸν ὅλον κόσμον διοικοῦντι, τῷ δὲ χεῖρον καὶ ζῳώδει ποτὲ συνεκκλίνοντα φέρεσθαι. οἱ δὲ τοῦτο παριδόντες οὔτε ἐν τούτοις βελτιοῦσαι τὴν αἰτίαν τῶν παθῶν οὔτε ἐν τοῖς περὶ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας καὶ ὁμολογίας ὁρθοδοξοῦσιν· οὐ γὰρ βλέπουν, ὅτι πρῶτόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτῇ τὸ κατὰ μὴδὲν ἄγεσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀλόγου τε καὶ κακοδαίμονος καὶ ἀθέου τῆς ψυχῆς (according to Méautis, Posidonius is here influenced by Pythagorean ideas [*Recherches sur le pythagorisme*, 61]); Arrian *Diss. Epict.* 1.14.12–14: τοῦτο δὲ σοι καὶ λέγει τις, ὅτι ἴσῃς ἔχεις δύναμιν τῷ Διί; ἀλλ’ οὐκ οὐδὲν ἤττον καὶ ἐπίτροπον ἐκάστω παρέσθηεν τὸν ἐκάστου δαίμονα καὶ παρέδωκεν φυλάσσειν αὐτὸν αὐτῷ καὶ τοῦτον ἀκοίμητον καὶ ἀπαραλόγιστον. τίμη γὰρ ἄλλω κρείττονι καὶ ἐπιμελεστέρω φύλακι παρέδωκεν ἂν ἡμῶν ἕκαστον; ὥσθ’, ὅταν κλείσητε τὰς θύρας καὶ σκότος ἐνδον ποιήσητε, μέμνησθε μηδέποτε λέγειν ὅτι μόνον ἐστέ· οὐ γὰρ ἐστέ, ἀλλ’ ὁ θεὸς ἐνδον ἐστὶ καὶ ὁ ὑμέτερος δαίμων ἐστίν; Marcus Aurelius 5.27: συζῆ δὲ θεοῖς ὁ συνεχῶς δεικνὺς αὐτοῖς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν ἄρεσκομένην μὲν τοῖς ἀπονεμομένοις, ποιούσαν δὲ, ὅσα βούλεται ὁ δαίμων ὃν ἐκάστω προστάτην καὶ ἡγεμόνα ὁ Ζεὺς ἔδωκεν, ἀπόσπασμα ἑαυτοῦ. οὗτος δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐκάστου νοῦς καὶ λόγος. Cf. also Seneca *Ep.* 41.2.

⁴⁶⁹ Cf. the myth of Timarchus in Plutarch *De gen.* 591d–f. The Pythagorean origin of this myth is defended by Méautis, *Recherches*, chap. 2, esp. pp. 61–63; van der Horst, “ΔΑΙΜΩΝ.”

⁴⁷⁰ Cf. Dragona-Monachou, “‘Τμνος σὸ δὲ Δία,’” 374: “δαίμων does not so much mean guardian angel, but soul and denotes particularly the *nous-logos*, which is the divine fragment in man” (mv translation). Cf. also Iamblichus Arab. in *CA* f. 308^r.7–12.

δαίμων will save men from many evils. Accordingly, Delatte and van der Horst decide upon the third option, namely, the δαίμων as soul. Insight into the nature of the δαίμων is then a variation of the γνῶθι σαυτόν motif;⁴⁷¹ it means insight into oneself as having a divine nature that has to be tended and protected, thus avoiding evils that may befall one through ignorance.⁴⁷² As we have seen, the relationship between gods and men does play an important role in this section, and from this perspective the interpretation proposed by Delatte and van der Horst fits in well with the larger context. However, their interpretation does not explain why the author speaks of “*what kind of δαίμων*”; it would surely simply be necessary for men to know *that* they themselves are δαίμονες. Furthermore, Detienne has pointed out that a definite distinction is made in the various texts between *being* a δαίμων, and *having* a δαίμων. The verb χρῶνται that is used in GV 62 indicates the latter. He cites several instances in which this verb is used in connection with a personal δαίμων and concludes that the interpretation of the personal δαίμων as expression of one’s fate is to be preferred.⁴⁷³

In an article written about ten years after his commentary, van der Horst revises his original position:

⁴⁷¹ In Greek magic the personal δαίμων was invoked in order to gain insight into the self; see Hans Dieter Betz, “The Delphic Maxim ‘Know Yourself’ in the Greek Magical Papyri,” *Hellenismus und Urchristentum*, 156–72.

⁴⁷² See Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 68–69; van der Horst, *Vers d’or*, 53. (In his article written about ten years later, van der Horst takes a different view; see the discussion below.) Hierocles also interprets the δαίμων as soul: καὶ νῦν δὲ ὁ λόγος ὡς ἀναγκαῖον πρὸς τὴν τῶν κακῶν λύσιν ἀπαυτεῖ τὴν ἐαυτῶν οὐσίαν ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν· τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν, οἷω τῷ δαίμονι χρῶνται, ἀντὶ τοῦ, οἷα ψυχῇ (in CA 25.5). Cf. also Proclus Arab. in CA f. 111^r.

⁴⁷³ Detienne, ‘*Daimôn*’ dans le pythagorisme, 129–30, 177, also 99. See also idem, “Sur la démonologie,” 22–23, esp. 23 n. 2. He cites Theognis 161 (quoted above, p. 201); Aristotle frg. 193 Rose: Ἀριστοτέλης δαίμοσι κεχρησθαι πάντας ἀνθρώπους λέγει συνομαρτοῦσιν αὐτοῖς παρὰ τὸν χρόνον τῆς ἐνσωματώσεως; Plutarch *De gen.* 585f–586a: καὶ μέντοι καὶ συμβαλὼν ἔωθεν Ἐπαμεινῶδα καὶ τὸν τρόπον ἀκούσας ᾧ θάψει Λῦσιν ἐπέγνω ὅτι καλῶς ἄκρι τῶν ἀπορρήτων πεπαιδευμένος ὑπ’ ἐκείνου τάνδρὸς εἶη καὶ χρῶτο ταυτῷ δαίμονι πρὸς τὸν βίον. To these we may add Plotinus 3.4.6.28–29: καὶ τοιούτῳ θεῷ καὶ δαίμονί γε ... χρήσεται. For the relation between the subject and object of χράσθαι, see G. Redard, *Recherches sur XPH, XPHΣΘAI: Étude sémantique* (Bibliothèque de l’École des Hautes Études 303; Paris: Champion, 1953) 42: “Personne ou chose, [l’objet] affirme toujours son indépendance par rapport au sujet. Que l’on considère des expressions comme χρῆσθαι θεῷ, κόσμῳ, λωτῷ, ἀσπίδι, ... toutes ces notions sont des réalités indépendantes de qui y fait recours; l’objet existe toujours hors du sujet qui jamais ne le modifie.” The meaning of χράσθαι in GV 62 fits into Redard’s category C.1.3: “jouir de, avoir, posséder” (ibid., 19); cf. also categories C.II and C.III.1 (pp. 19–28).

Nous arrivons à la conclusion que le démon du *Carmen Aureum* admet bien une double explication [i.e., as personal *δαίμων* or as soul], mais il est probable qu'on doit l'entendre comme protecteur divin, que Zeus donne aux hommes comme compagnon pendant la vie.

He adds, however, that the author of the *Golden Verses* probably did not distinguish as finely between the various meanings as we do.⁴⁷⁴

The *δαίμων* in *GV* 62 is then a divine being intimately connected with a person's fate, able to guide and protect one from evil, as Phocylides claims.⁴⁷⁵ Insight into the character of one's *δαίμων* is therefore also insight into one's fate; we will be spared many troubles by not acting against our fate (cf. also *μήτε ἄελπτ' ἐλπίζειν*, *GV* 53), but by following and cultivating our fate-*δαίμων* instead.⁴⁷⁶ Following one's *δαίμων* helps to counteract the destructive influence of that other deadly companion, Discord.⁴⁷⁷ *GV* 61–62 refer to the same motifs that we encountered in *GV* 14–20, that is, self-knowledge as insight into the limitations of the human condition, and the acceptance of one's fate (cf. *δαιμονίαισι τύχαις*, *GV* 17). Here, however, they are applied in a much more specific sense.

Zeus is the appropriate deity to invoke in this context, since he is closely connected with one's *δαίμων*, and he is also often called upon as Savior.⁴⁷⁸ The type of conditional construction used to formulate the prayer, indicates that the author considers its fulfillment only a remote possibility; he is well aware of the sharp contrast between the 'few' that know the deliverance from the evils that beset them (*GV* 56) and the 'all' that can be saved.⁴⁷⁹ Lest this awareness discourage the student, he hastens to assure him in the

⁴⁷⁴ Van der Horst, "ΔΑΙΜΩΝ," 60–68; quotation from p. 67.

⁴⁷⁵ Phocylides frg. 16 Diehl; quoted p. 201 above.

⁴⁷⁶ Cf. Pindar *Pyth.* 3.108–9: τὸν δ' ἀμφέποντ' αἰεὶ φρασὶν / δαίμον' ἀσκήσω κατ' ἐμὸν θεραπεύων μηχανάν. In late antiquity attempts were made to determine one's *δαίμων* by means magical or astrological in order to *rectify* one's fate. Cf. *PGM* 13.710–11: ἐρεῖ [sc. the god invoked by means of the magic spell] σοι καὶ περὶ ἄστρου καὶ πολὺς ἐστὶν ὁ σὸς δαίμων καὶ ὁ ὠροσκόπος, καὶ ποῦ ζήσῃ καὶ ποῦ ἀποθανεῖσαι. All this knowledge will enable the magician to ask for a *διόρθωσις* ('rectification') of his life. Cf. also Iamblichus *Myst.* 9.3.

⁴⁷⁷ So also van der Horst, "ΔΑΙΜΩΝ," 66.

⁴⁷⁸ Cf. Pindar *Pyth.* 5.122–23: Διὸς τοι νόος μέγας κυβερνή / δαίμον' ἀνδρῶν φίλων; *Nem.* 10.76: πάτερ, Κρονίων, τίς δὴ λύσις ἔσσεται πενθέων; Pythagoreans invoked Zeus as *σωτήρ* (Iamblichus *VP* 155), a common epithet of his; cf. LSJ, s.v. *σωτήρ* I.2.

⁴⁷⁹ 'All' is emphasized by its repetition within the chiasmic structure in *GV* 61–62: λύσειας ἅπαντας εἰ πᾶσιν δείξαις.

next verses of his divine origin and of the possibility of insight into nature.

GV 63–64

ἀλλὰ σὺ θάρσει, ἐπεὶ θεῖον γένος ἐστὶ βροτοῖσιν,
οἷς ἱερὰ προφέρουσα φύσις δείκνυσιν ἕκαστα.

But take courage, for mortals have a divine origin,
to whom Nature displays and shows each sacred object.

The author offers the student a *consolatio*: even if it is true that very few people know what is good for them and how to be delivered from their troubles, even if it is very improbable that Zeus would save all by revealing their δαίμων, he need not despair: human beings have a divine origin and Nature consequently reveals every mystery to them.

As we shall see, in these verses and those that follow, the author makes use of language referring to mystery cults. Philosophical and even scientific sects often presented their doctrines as mysteries into which the novice had to be initiated. It is difficult to determine to what extent this self-presentation was accompanied by ritual practices; one suspects that in many cases mystery terminology is only used figuratively.⁴⁸⁰

The *consolatio* may have been a regular part of the ritual of mystery cults. After experiencing the terrors of darkness, of isolation, of uncertainty, the initiate suddenly enters the light; everything is revealed, there is no reason for despair, joy abounds.⁴⁸¹ According to Cumont, the basis of this *consolatio* is ultimately the ‘hope’ (ἀγαθὴ ἐλπίς) of a better life promised to initiates here and in the afterlife.⁴⁸² Here also, the student is promised a full

⁴⁸⁰ See des Places, “Platon et la langue des mystères,” *Études platoniciennes*, 83–98; Nock, *Essays* 2.799–803; John M. Dillon, “Self-Definition in Later Platonism,” in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition 3: Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. Ben F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982) 73–75; Christoph Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien* (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 26; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987); Jean Pépin, “Cosmic Piety,” in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman* (ed. A. H. Armstrong; World Spirituality 15; New York: Crossroad, 1986) 408–35; Derron, *Pseudo-Phocylide*, 18 n. 1; Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Carl Newell Jackson Lectures; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) 78–80.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. the description of initiation in Plutarch frg. 178 Sandbach; also the joyful exclamation “I escaped from evil, I found the better” by initiates of a Dionysiac cult in Demosthenes 18.259; in general, Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 91–93.

⁴⁸² Franz Cumont, *Lux perpetua* (Paris: Geuthner, 1949) 240, 401–5, with many references. He suspects that GV 63, 66b may have been the source of inspiration for the liturgical

revelation (GV 64), deliverance from toils (GV 66), and, eventually, immortality (GV 70–71).

The immediate reason for the assurance, however, is twofold: mortals have a divine origin and Nature reveals everything to them. The relationship between these two factors has been interpreted in different ways which mainly depend on the logical value assigned to the adjectival clause. For Delatte, the adjectival clause is *restrictive*: only those people to whom Nature reveals all, can be sure of their divine origin. Hierocles shares this view.⁴⁸³ It is not clear how such a statement would afford any comfort in our present context. The student does not need a definition of divine men; he has to be reassured that despite the folly of most people, men do have a special bond with god and that it is possible to gain insight into the mysteries surrounding him. To be sure, Delatte considers GV 63–66 a distinct fragment unrelated to the preceding verses, but this is a completely arbitrary division for which he does not offer any proof at all.⁴⁸⁴

Van der Horst, on the other hand, takes the adjectival clause to have a *causal* function: men have something divine in them *because* Nature reveals to them her secrets.⁴⁸⁵ This non-restrictive interpretation is an improvement on Delatte's, but he still misses the real point the author is trying to make, namely, that there is an

formula from an unknown mystery cult cited by Firmicus Maternus *De err. prof. relig.* 22: *θαρρεῖτε μύσται τοῦ θεοῦ σσασωμένων. / ἔσται γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐκ πόνων σωτηρία* ["Take courage, initiates of the god who has been saved; for you have salvation from your troubles"] (p. 404). Such a direct relationship is unlikely, but the similarity lends some support to my hypothesis that the author of the *Golden Verses* presents his own tradition as a mystery cult. Cf. also R. Joly, "L'exhortation au courage (*θαρρεῖν*) dans les mystères," *REG* 68 (1955) 164–70. See further on this formula Marcel Simon, "Θάρρει, οὐδείς ἀθάνατος: Étude de vocabulaire religieux," *Le christianisme antique et son contexte religieux: Scripta varia* (2 vols.; WUNT 23; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1981) 63–81. Simon locates the formula within the Osiris cult. For the use of the command *θάρρει* in the New Testament, see Walter Grundmann, "θαρρέω (*θαρσέω*)," *TDNT* 3.25–27.

⁴⁸³ Cf. Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 70–71: "Le maître invite son disciple à se rassurer; la raison de la confiance qu'il veut lui inspirer, c'est que les mortels à qui 'la Nature sacrée révèle toutes choses' peuvent compter sur leur parenté avec les dieux. Si le disciple est de leur nombre, il vaincra.... Tous les hommes sont parents des dieux, sans doute; mais ceux-là seuls peuvent prétendre à rentrer dans leur sein qui ont reconnu leur nature divine en participant aux révélations ..."; Hierocles in *CA* 25.6–8.

⁴⁸⁴ See Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 60.

⁴⁸⁵ See van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 55: "Nous comprenons alors *βροτοῖσιν, οἷς* ... comme 'à tous les hommes, car c'est à ceux ...'" For the possible causal function of an adjectival clause, see Kühner-Gerth, §§ 558.2, 563.3a.

alternative, or rather a supplement to Zeus' revelation (δείξαις, GV 62), which was only a remote possibility in any case. This supplementary revelation (δείκνυσιν, GV 64) is given by Nature to all mortals; it is in principle possible for all to have full insight into everything. The adjectival clause therefore gives *additional* information about mortals ("Mortals have a divine origin, to whom Nature [also] reveals everything");⁴⁸⁶ it could perhaps also express the *consequence* of man's divine nature ("Mortals have a divine origin, to whom Nature [thus] reveals everything").⁴⁸⁷

63 Let us return to the first reason the author gives to encourage the student: θεῶν γένος ἐστὶ βροτοῖσιν. This clause has been interpreted in two ways. Most critics take this to mean "Mortals have a divine origin," or the more or less equivalent "The race of mortals is divine." Van der Horst, on the other hand, advocates the interpretation "There is a divine race within mortals" and takes θεῶν γένος as referring to the soul-δαίμων.⁴⁸⁸ γένος can certainly mean either 'race' or 'origin,'⁴⁸⁹ but it is to be doubted whether βροτοῖσιν can have the locative value of 'in mortals.'⁴⁹⁰ The only alternative is to take βροτοῖσιν as a possessive dative such as the majority interpretation assumes.

This interpretation is confirmed by a parallel expression occurring in some of the texts inscribed on gold leaves that were found in Southern Italy and elsewhere. These texts were buried with adherents of what probably was an Orphic or Bacchic sect, and contain directions and passwords to be used in the afterlife.⁴⁹¹ When

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 152: "Göttlich ist das Geschlecht der Sterblichen, und der Natur, die das Heilige offenbart, zeigt ihnen alles" (emphasis added).

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. Iamblichus Arab. in CA f. 308^v.13–14. For these functions of adjectival clauses, cf. Kühner-Gerth, §§ 561.2 (logical coordination), 558.3, 563.3c (logical result).

⁴⁸⁸ Van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 54–55. Cf. also Linley, *Proclus' Commentary*, 95: "There is a divine nature in man."

⁴⁸⁹ For the latter meaning, cf. esp. Bauer-Aland, s.v. γένος 1.

⁴⁹⁰ For the use of the locative dative, see Kühner-Gerth 1.442, § 426.1. All the examples cited by Kühner-Gerth for a possible locative dative applied to human beings imply the meaning 'among,' never 'in.'

⁴⁹¹ The Gold Leaves have until recently been considered 'Orphic'; hence their inclusion in Kern's collection of Orphic fragments (Orphic frg. 32a–g) and among the fragments of Orpheus in Diels' collection of Presocratic fragments (DK 1B17–20). The most extensive study of the Gold Leaves is by Zuntz, who suggests a Pythagorean origin (*Persephone*, bk. 3, "The Gold Leaves"). A subsequent discovery at Hipponion of yet another gold leaf with hitherto unknown verses referring to βάρχοι seems to prove a Bacchic origin. See Walter Burkert, "Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries," 1–8, esp. 2; idem, *Greek Religion*, 293–95.

an initiate appears before the guardians in Hades, he has to say,

Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος·
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον· τόδε δ' ἴστε καὶ αὐτοί.

I am a son of Earth and of starry Heaven,
and I have a heavenly origin; this you yourselves also know.⁴⁹²

The first half of the second line can only mean, “I have a heavenly origin,” or “My race is heavenly.” In a different version the soul addresses Persephone and other deities of the underworld:

ἔρχομαι ἐκ κοθαρῶν κοθαρά, χθονίων βασίλεια,
Εὐκλῆς Εὐβουλεύς τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι·
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὖχομαι εἶμεν.

Pure I come from the pure, Queen of the underworld,
Eucles, Eubuleus, and you other immortal gods,
for I also profess to be of your blessed race.

Further on in the text Persephone assures him:

ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ, θεὸς δ' ἔσῃ ἀντὶ βροτοῖο.

Blessed and most happy one, you will be a god instead of a mortal.⁴⁹³

In both versions, *γένος* refers to the soul's status which gives the initiate a claim on special consideration by the gods.⁴⁹⁴ Burkert speaks of a “foundation of privilege through genealogy”; the initiate's claim “presupposes a story of generation which the initiate has come to ‘know,’ in contrast to the others who are excluded from the secret.”⁴⁹⁵

Although the divine origin of man became a commonplace in Greek thought, not all people understood this notion and all its implications.⁴⁹⁶ As we have seen, the recognition of the special bond

⁴⁹² Gold Leaves B1.6–7 Zuntz = Orphic frg. 32a.6–7 Kern = DK 1B17.6–7.

⁴⁹³ Gold Leaves A1.1–3, 8 Zuntz = Orphic frg. 32c.1–3, 10 Kern = DK 1B18.1–3, 10. Cf. also Gold Leaves A2–3 Zuntz.

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. the commentary by Zuntz, *Persephone*, 312–13. To be sure, van der Horst also cites the Gold Leaf texts, but without recognizing their implication for the syntax of *GV* 63 (*Vers d'or*, 58).

⁴⁹⁵ Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 76–77.

⁴⁹⁶ Cf. Pindar *Nem.* 6.1–2: ἐν ἀνδρῶν, ἐν θεῶν γένος· ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν / ματρὸς ἀμφοτέρω; Cleanthes *Hymn to Zeus* 4 (= *SVF* 1.537, p. 121.37): ἐκ σοῦ [sc. Διὸς] γὰρ γένος ἐσμέν; Aratus *Phaen.* 5: τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμέν; Acts 17:28; Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 30.26: ἡμᾶς ... ξυγγενεῖς ὄντας αὐτῶν [sc. τῶν θεῶν]· ἀπὸ γὰρ τῶν θεῶν ... τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἶναι γένος; Apollonius of Tyana *Ep.* 44, p. 56.4–5 Penella: πάντας ἀνθρώπους ... ὡς ἂν γένος μὲν ὄντας θεοῦ. On the topic in general, see des Places, *Syngeneia*; Pépin,

between god and man is treated in this poem as a special insight—a ‘mystery’ in fact—with which the student will become acquainted (GV 50–51).⁴⁹⁷ In the Gold Leaves too, this knowledge is something most souls forget after death; for this reason it has to be inculcated during initiation and be written down so that the initiate may remember it and use it in the world beyond the grave.⁴⁹⁸ The *consolatio* in GV 63 is therefore simply a reminder of the insight the student will gain according to GV 50–51. This insight into his special status vis-à-vis the gods will help him to avoid pitfalls in this life (cf. λύσιν κακῶν, GV 56; πόνων ἀπὸ τῶνδε, GV 66), and eventually procure his release from the toils that await the ignorant in the afterlife.⁴⁹⁹

There is a dynamic tension in the *Golden Verses* between *being* and *becoming* divine. This tension is encapsulated in the metaphor of being put “in the footsteps of divine Virtue” (GV 46). Knowledge of the relationship between god and man presupposes a likeness in being (GV 50–53) and the student already participates to some extent in this divine status (GV 65). On the other hand, participation depends on a continual process of mastering the precepts (cf. κρατήσας, GV 49; κρατήσεις, GV 65) and working at the relationship between god and man (cf. GV 48b–49a).⁵⁰⁰ Unlike

Idées grecques, esp. pp. 5–51. Whether the Pindar passage really represents the notion of kinship with god is debatable; according to des Places, it emphasizes the distinctness of the divine and mortal races (*Syngeneia*, 26; *Religion grecque*, 183, 359); cf. also Pépin, *Idées grecques*, 5. On the other hand, ancient commentators preferred the unitary interpretation; cf. *ibid.*, 36–38.

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. Nestle, *Philologische Wochenschrift* 44 (1934) 1221: “Daß die Menschen ‘göttlichen Geschlechts’ sind ([GV] 63), ist ein alter ... Gedanke ..., der aber allerdings hier im Sinne der orphisch-pythagoreischen Seelenmystik gewendet ist.”

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 294.

⁴⁹⁹ In [Plato] *Axiochus* 371d, Axiochus is encouraged to face death with equanimity because he is a γεννήτης τῶν θεῶν on the basis of his initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries. Rohde argues that this refers to an adoption of the initiate by the gods which gives him a special status in the afterlife (*Psyche* 2.422–23), but this theory has been strongly opposed by other scholars. See the commentary on this passage by Jackson P. Hershbell, *Pseudo-Plato: Axiochus* (SBLTT 21; Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981) 68–69.

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. Pépin, *Idées grecques*, 9, on the relation between συγγένεια and ὁμοίωσις θεῶν: “Nulle synonymie entre les deux mots: la συγγένεια désigne un état de fait, qui est le lot de tout homme sans initiative de sa part, cependant que l’ὁμοίωσις marque une action à assumer, dont le résultat ne peut être garanti. Mais nulle contradiction non plus entre les deux notions: la parenté divine étant une simple virtualité, un point de départ nécessaire mais insuffisant, il appartient à l’homme soit d’en tirer parti par un effort positif d’assimilation, soit de renoncer par négligence à en bénéficier; l’assimilation ne peut s’engager si elle ne prend appui sur une parenté préexistante; mais la parenté ne mène à rien si elle n’est ratifiée et fécondée par une volonté d’assimilation.”

Empedocles, who claims to be immortal in this life,⁵⁰¹ the student will finally achieve this status only after death (GV 70–71). As Detienne puts it,

on peut être δαίμων de son vivant comme Pythagore ou Empédocle, mais aussi on peut *réaliser* son δαίμων. Dans certaine pensée religieuse, c'est un mode d'existence ou plutôt la finalité d'une μελέτη ou ἄσκησις. Toutefois, le plus souvent, c'est la conclusion d'une longue vie de vertu, et elle coïncide avec la mort.⁵⁰²

64 The second reason for reassurance is that it is possible to have insight into the mysteries of nature. This, like the previous verse, is a repetition of a motif we encountered at the beginning of this section (GV 52). The previous verse offers consolation by answering the question “Who am I really?” Implicitly, it also contains the answer to the question “Where am I going?” Insight into nature provides the answer to the question “What is my place and function within the system of relationships of which I am a part?” These answers help the student to escape the evils to which people without insight are subject; they keep him from wishing for the unattainable (GV 53) and they give direction and purpose to his life (contrast GV 57–59).

Nature herself is described as a hierophant displaying and showing (προφέρουσα ... δείκνυσιν) all the holy objects (ἱερὰ ... ἕκαστα) to the initiates.⁵⁰³ This of course presupposes that Nature is secretive, that she has mysteries to conceal or to reveal. There is in fact a well-known Heraclitean saying to this effect: φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ (“Nature loves to conceal”).⁵⁰⁴ Nature is not transparent, but veiled and often confusing. One has to be initiated to understand her secrets; it requires preparation and purifica-

⁵⁰¹ Cf. Empedocles frg. 102 Wright = frg. 112 DK.

⁵⁰² Detienne, ‘*Daîmôn*’ dans le pythagorisme, 99.

⁵⁰³ GV 64 may of course also be construed differently. Prior to van der Horst, most scholars took ἱερὰ as an adjective describing φύσις (cf. Hierocles in CA 25.7; Iamblichus Arab. in CA f. 308^v.13; Mullach, FPG 1.198; Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 70). Van der Horst suggests that it is the object of προφέρουσα (Vers d’or, 56), a suggestion accepted by most subsequent scholars. My own contribution is to take ἱερὰ as an adjective describing ἕκαστα, the latter functioning as the object of both participle and verb. This construction has the stylistic advantage of forming a very neat chiasm in which φύσις occupies the emphasized central position: A (ἱερὰ), B (προφέρουσα), C (φύσις), B' (δείκνυσιν), A' (ἕκαστα). For ἱερὰ as technical term referring to the sacred objects of a mystery cult, see Othmar Perler, “Arkandisziplin,” RAC 1 (1950) 669.

⁵⁰⁴ Heraclitus frg. 123 DK. Cf. also Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 79.

tion.⁵⁰⁵ However, she is ultimately willing to share her mysteries with people like the student who are able to receive them.

It is difficult to determine what is meant by “each sacred object”; the author is probably deliberately vague. On the other hand, we have seen that the *τετρακτύς* was considered a key by means of which the secrets of nature might be unlocked, that it might in fact have been associated with a ritual (see the commentary on GV 47 above). If so, the ‘sacred things’ may be an allusion to some secret knowledge to be revealed to the initiate. We are also reminded of a notice by Hippolytus of Rome: *θαυμάσας δὲ* [sc. Pythagoras] *τὴν διοίκησιν τῶν ὄλων ἡξίωσε τὰ πρῶτα σιγᾶν τοὺς μαθητάς, οἷονεὶ μύστας τοῦ παντὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἤκοντας* (“Because Pythagoras admired the ordering of the universe, he commanded his disciples to remain silent at first, as if they have come into the world as initiates of the universe”; *Haer.* 1.2.3). However, cosmic piety, that is, a belief in, and a worship of the world and the heavenly bodies as divine beings, was practiced in various forms among philosophers at least from the time of Plato onwards. To quote only one example in which the world becomes a temple and philosophers initiators:

Κλεάνθης ... τοὺς θεοὺς μυστικὰ σχήματα ἔλεγεν εἶναι καὶ κλήσεις ἱεράς, καὶ δαδούχον ἔφασκεν εἶναι τὸν ἥλιον, καὶ τὸν κόσμον μυστήριον καὶ τοὺς κατόχους τῶν θείων τελεστὰς ἔλεγε.

Cleanthes ... used to say that the gods are figures of initiation and sacred invocations, he added that the sun is a torch-bearer, he called the world a place of initiation and the keepers of the divine truths the initiators.⁵⁰⁶

Be that as it may, the way of life prescribed in the *Golden Verses*

⁵⁰⁵ Cf. the similar use of *ιερά* within the context of medical knowledge in Hippocrates *Lex* 5, p. 8.15–17 Heiberg: τὰ δὲ ἱερά ἐόντα πρήγματα ἱεροῖσιν ἀνθρώποισι δεικνύται, βεβήλοισι δὲ οὐ θέμις, πρὶν ἢ τελεσθῶσιν ὀργίοισιν ἐπιστήμης.

⁵⁰⁶ SVF 1.538; trans. Pépin, “Cosmic Piety,” 425 (slightly adapted). For a discussion of cosmic religion, see Festugière, *Révélation d’Hermès Trismégiste 2: Le dieu cosmique*, esp. pp. 233–38 (he discusses the Cleanthes fragment on p. 235); Pépin, “Cosmic Piety” (with many references). An interesting later parallel to the motif of nature as hierophant is to be found in Plotinus, who speaks of the universe as prophet (ὁ κόσμος δὲ ὅδε ... τὰ ἐκείνου [sc. θεοῦ] προφητεύει ἀνθρώποις; Plotinus 2.9.9.41–42). Plotinus is arguing against the Gnostics who attempt to bypass the contemplation of the universe by claiming a direct, unmediated revelation by god. “For the pure Hellenic rationalist [e.g., Plotinus], the only prophet of divine enlightenment is the contemplated universe” (John F. Phillips, “The Universe as Prophet: A Soteriological Formula in Plotinus,” *GRBS* 22 [1981] 269–81; quotation from p. 279). Cf., however, already Rom 1:19–20.

may certainly be seen as a preparation for an initiation by means of which the student will become acquainted with mysteries such as those mentioned in *GV* 50–64.⁵⁰⁷

GV 63–64 form an *inclusio* with *GV* 50–53 by repeating the motifs occurring in the latter verses; they thus conclude the section on metaphysical questions.

2 Conclusion (*GV* 65–71)

In the concluding verses the author again stresses the connection between mastering the precepts and participating in the mysteries; he also adds a promise of salvation (*GV* 65–66). Further exhortations are given concerning abstinence from certain food and the need for judgment (*GV* 67–69). The poem ends with the promise of immortality (*GV* 70–71).

GV 65–66

ὦν εἴ σοί τι μέτεστι, κρατήσεις ὦν σε κελεύω
ἐξακέσας, ψυχὴν δὲ πόνων ἀπὸ τῶνδε σώσεις.

If you have any share in this, you will master what I command you by means of a thorough cure, and you will save your soul from these sufferings.

GV 65–66 function as transitional material. They reiterate the need to master the precepts, and summarize the benefit to be gained. (Cf. also the role *κρατέω* plays in *GV* 9 and 49.)

65–66a The first relative pronoun (ὦν) in *GV* 65 is functionally equivalent to *τούτων* (cf. *GV* 9, 49). Although we should probably take *ἱερὰ ἕκαστα* in the preceding verse as its primary antecedent,⁵⁰⁸ it refers by extension to everything taught in *GV* 50–64.⁵⁰⁹ The second ὦν refers to all the precepts given in the poem. The student is now promised that participation in the ‘mysteries’ will help him to master the precepts.⁵¹⁰ Whereas mastering the pre-

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. also Pseudo-Phocylides 229, where the whole poem is characterized as *δικαιοσύνης μυστήρια*. See P. W. van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 260–61; Derron, *Pseudo-Phocylide*, 18 n. 1.

⁵⁰⁸ So van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 59–61. The alternative, namely, to take *βροτοῖσιν* as antecedent, does not make sense unless the latter is given the restrictive meaning Delatte proposes.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. also the comprehensive denotation of *ῥᾶντα* in *GV* 45, 49.

⁵¹⁰ The future *κρατήσεις* could of course also express a command, but in view of the promise in *GV* 66, it is perhaps best to take this as a promise as well.

cepts was made a *condition* of gaining insight in GV 49, it is here promised as a *consequence*. This apparent contradiction is simply a reflection of the dialectical experience of spiritual growth: the more advanced one is spiritually, the more one understands, and the more one understands, the more progress one makes.

The function of ἐξάκεσας is somewhat ambiguous. Since it is not immediately clear how ‘healing’ relates to ‘mastering’ the precepts, some scholars have read ἐξάκεσας with the rest of GV 66: “Having healed your soul completely, you will save it from these sufferings.”⁵¹¹ The problem with this reading, however, is the position of δέ. The postponement of δέ to the third position is unusual, although it is by no means impossible, especially in poetic usage.⁵¹² It would nonetheless be more natural for ἐξάκεσας to be construed with what precedes; the possible meanings of such a reading should be exhausted before we turn to the alternative. My own translation above indicates such a possible meaning and at the same time reflects a further ambiguity: does ἐξάκεσας qualify κελεύω or κρατήσεις? The former would refer to the therapeutic activity of the instructor, the latter to that of the student. Both are valid psychagogic perspectives, but I think the emphasis in the *Golden Verses* is on what the student should and will do, not on the responsibilities of the teacher.

‘A thorough cure’ is the goal and consequence of mastering the precepts. The metaphoric use of illness and health to indicate a person’s moral and spiritual condition is very common among ancient philosophers. Vice and ignorance are seen as illnesses of the soul for which philosophy can effect a cure. The practice of philosophy thus becomes participation in a therapeutic process.⁵¹³ Pythagoreans shared this view of spiritual guidance.⁵¹⁴ (Cf. also the commentary on GV 19 above.)

A further intriguing possibility to be considered, is that ἐξ-

⁵¹¹ Cf. Mullach, *FPG* 1.198 = *Hieroclis commentarius* 18; van der Horst, *Vers d’or*, 61. See also Iamblichus Arab. in *CA* Q 623.

⁵¹² Cf. Denniston, *Greek Particles*, 187: “Poets go much further in the postponement of δέ, more, probably, as a matter of metrical convenience than from a reluctance to separate words closely united in sense.” He continues by citing more than a page full of examples.

⁵¹³ Cf., e.g., Democritus frg. 31 DK; Plato *Resp.* 444c–e, 515c, 609c–611a; Epicurus frg. 221 Usener; Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 3.23.30; Porphyry *Marc.* 9. Cf. also the references and literature cited in the commentary on GV 19 above, esp. in n. 222. To these may be added Kudlien, “Gesundheit.”

⁵¹⁴ Cf. Porphyry *VP* 33; Iamblichus *VP* 64, 70, 110–11, 196, 225; Apollonius of Tyana *Ep.* 23.

ακέσας refers to a technical term for healing within Pythagorean-Orphic circles. According to Aristophanes, “Orpheus taught us mystic rites and to abstain from killing animals, and Musaeus *thorough cures* for illnesses and oracles ...” (Ὀρθεὺς μὲν γὰρ τελετάς θ’ ἡμῖν κατέδειξε φόνων τ’ ἀπέχεσθαι, Μουσαῖος δ’ ἐξακέσεις τε νόσων καὶ χρησμούς; *Ran.* 1032–33 = Orpheus A11 DK). The word ἐξακέσεις is a *hapax legomenon*; according to a scholion on this passage it means *θεραπείας*. Musaeus was reputedly a student of Orpheus; another scholiast informs us that “he composed ‘deliverances’ and ‘rites’ and ‘purifications’” (οὗτος λύσεις καὶ τελετάς καὶ καθαρμούς συνέθηκεν).⁵¹⁵ In the very next verses (*GV* 67–68) the author of our poem himself refers to works with the titles *Καθαρμοί* and *Λύσεις ψυχῆς* (*Purifications* and *Deliverance of the Soul*). In this context it is thus quite probable that ἐξακέσας refers to ritual healings called ἐξακέσεις.⁵¹⁶ The similarity in form between these two words would perhaps also explain why the poet used the unusual active form here instead of the normal medium.⁵¹⁷

66b The goal of mastering the precepts and healing is to free the soul from sufferings. ‘These sufferings’ can only refer to the sufferings mentioned earlier in the poem (*GV* 54, 56, 58, 61), since the pronoun “ὅδε, like οὗτος, ... designate[s] what is *nearer* as opp[osed] to what is *more remote*; but ὅδε refers more distinctly to *what is present*, to *what can be seen* or *pointed out*.”⁵¹⁸ The sufferings already referred to in the poem denote primarily pains experienced in this life, but sufferings in the afterlife cannot be excluded. Since they are the consequence of ignorance and internal

⁵¹⁵ Orphic testimonium 90 Kern = Musaeus A6 DK = scholion on Aristophanes *Ran.* 1033 (λύσεις Dindorf: παραλύσεις cod.). Cf. also Plato *Resp.* 364bc, e (quoted below on p. 216).

⁵¹⁶ Cf. also the term ἀκεῖσθαι used with reference to Orphic rites in Plato *Resp.* 364c (quoted below).

⁵¹⁷ It is tempting to suggest that ἐξακέσας in *GV* 66 should read ἐξακέσεις. *GV* 65–66 would then be “If you have a share in this, you will prevail in the healings of that which I command you, and you will save your soul from these sufferings.”

⁵¹⁸ LSJ, s.v. ὅδε. A similar interpretation is given by van der Horst, *Vers d’or*, 62; Franz Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 35; 1942; reprint, Paris: Geuthner, 1966) 375 n. 4. Delatte, on the other hand, interprets the sufferings as “peines qui attendent les âmes impures après la mort” (*Littérature pythagoricienne*, 70). This interpretation is only possible because he considers *GV* 63–66 a fragment taken out of context by the compiler of the *Golden Verses*.

discord,⁵¹⁹ healing the soul of these will naturally result in a deliverance from suffering.

GV 67–69

ἀλλ' εἵργου βρωτῶν ὧν εἵπομεν ἔν τε Καθαρμοῖς
ἔν τε Λύσει ψυχῆς, κρίνων καὶ φράζεν ἕκαστα
ἡνίοχον γνώμην στήσας καθύπερθεν ἀρίστην.

But keep away from food that we have mentioned in *Purifications* and in *Deliverance of the Soul*, with discernment, and consider each thing by putting the excellent faculty of judgment in control as charioteer.⁵²⁰

The general drift of GV 67–69 is clear enough: abstinence from certain food is somehow related to the purification and release of the soul, and it requires discernment and judgment. Some problems of detail remain, however. The first concerns the precise meaning of ἔν τε καθαρμοῖς ἔν τε λύσει ψυχῆς, the second the phraseology of these verses.

67–68a Prior to Diehl's edition, scholars have understood ἔν τε καθαρμοῖς ἔν τε λύσει ψυχῆς to refer to the *practice* of purification and releasing of the soul. As a consequence they see the phrase as dependent on the participle κρίνων that follows it.⁵²¹ The main objection to this interpretation is that the preceding clause, ὧν εἵπομεν, needs a point of reference, since the author has not mentioned food from which the student has to abstain anywhere in the poem itself. The most natural interpretation is therefore that the phrase under discussion refers to *other texts* in which these foods are mentioned.⁵²² Alternatively, βρωτῶν ὧν εἵπομεν ἔν τε

⁵¹⁹ Cf. also Hesiod *Theog.* 226, where Ἐρις is made mother of Πόνος.

⁵²⁰ Cf. van der Horst's translation: "ayant pris sur le char comme conductrice l'excellente intelligence" (*Vers d'or*, 68). An alternative is provided by Mullach, *FGP* 1.199: *ratione, optima rectrice, superiori in loco constituta*; similarly Farina, *Versi aurei*, 43. It is less probable, however, that the feminine adjective ἀρίστην could qualify ἡνίοχον.

⁵²¹ All editions prior to Diehl's print this phrase without capitalization. Cf. Mullach, *FGP* 1.198: *cum in lustrationibus tum in purgatione animi*; Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 72: "Le disciple doit, à l'occasion de ces abstinences, appliquer son jugement (κρίνων) dans les purifications et la délivrance de l'âme"; Farina, *Versi aurei*, 43. Thus also Hierocles in *CA* 26.3, 26.20–26; Iamblichus Arab. in *CA* Q 623; Proclus Arab. in *CA* f. 112^v.

⁵²² This interpretation was first defended by van der Horst (*Vers d'or*, 62–64), although it is already implied by the capitalization in Diehl's 1923 edition. It has been accepted by most subsequent scholars, Farina being a notable exception. However, in a manuscript unknown to van der Horst dating from ca. 1600 (cod. Mus. Britt. 18190 [add] ff. 236–37^v), we already find the following modern Greek paraphrase of GV 67–68: ἀμὴ ἐμποδίζου, τουτέστι λείπε, ἀπὸ τὰ βρώματα καὶ φαγητά, ἀπὸ ὅσα ἐδιορίσαμεν καὶ ἐν οἷς βιβλίοις περὶ καθάρ-

καθαρμοῖς ἔν τε λύσει ψυχῆς could mean “food that we mentioned in regard to⁵²³ purifications and the release of the soul,”⁵²⁴ but this still requires a previous (extratextual) occasion on which the author has mentioned this to the student, and it is perhaps a less elegant solution than the other.

What evidence do we have for the existence of texts called *Καθαρμοί* and *Λῦσις ψυχῆς*? As to the former, there were several texts in antiquity with this title. The best known is the poem by Empedocles, but poems by this name are also attributed to Abaris and Epimenides.⁵²⁵ According to Plato, Orphics made use of “a hubbub of books” attributed to Musaeus and Orpheus, that were concerned with *λύσεις τε καὶ καθαρμοὶ ἀδίκημάτων*:

ἀγύρται δὲ καὶ μάντιες ἐπὶ πλουσίων θύρας ἰόντες πείθουσιν ὥς ἔστι παρὰ σφίσι δύναμις ἐκ θεῶν ποριζομένη θυσίαις τε καὶ ἐπφδαῖς, εἴτε τι ἀδίκημά του γέγονεν αὐτοῦ ἢ προγόνων, ἀκεῖσθαι μεθ’ ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐορτῶν.... βίβλων δὲ ὅμαδον παρέχονται Μουσαίου καὶ Ὀρφέως ... καθ’ ὅς θηηπολοῦσι, πείθοντες οὐ μόνον ἰδιώτας ἀλλὰ καὶ πόλεις, ὥς ἄρα λύσεις τε καὶ καθαρμοὶ ἀδικημάτων διὰ θυσίων καὶ παιδιᾶς ἡδονῶν εἰσὶ μὲν ἔτι ζῶσιν, εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ τελευτήσασιν, ὅς δὴ τελετὰς καλοῦσιν, αἱ τῶν ἐκεῖ κακῶν ἀπολύουσιν ἡμᾶς, μὴ θύσαντας δὲ δεινὰ περιμένει.

Begging priests and soothsayers go to rich men’s doors and make them believe that they by means of sacrifices and incantations have accumulated a treasure of power from the gods that can expiate and cure with pleasurable festivals any misdeed of a man or his ancestors.... And they produce a *hubbub of books* of Musaeus and Orpheus, ... and these

σεως ψυχῆς, καὶ ἐν οἷς βιβλίους περὶ ἀναλύσεως ψυχῆς διορίζομεν, καὶ δοκίμαζε καὶ διανοοῦ ὅλα (Lindstam, “En nygrekisk parafras,” 344–45).

⁵²³ For this meaning of *ἐν* with the dative, cf. LSJ, s.v., A.I.7.

⁵²⁴ This appears to be Hierocles’ interpretation: εἴργου, γὰρ φησι, βρωμάτων· εἶτα ὥσπερ ἐρωτῶντός τινος· ποίων ἀπεκρίνατο· ὦν εἶπομεν. καὶ πάλιν ὥς πρὸς δευτέραν πρὸς εὐσιν ζητοῦσαν, ποῦ εἶπον περὶ τούτων οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι καὶ ἐν ποίαις μαθημάτων παραδόσεις ἀποχὰς βρωμάτων συνήφηναν, ἐπήγαγεν· ἐν τε καθαρμοῖς ἐν τε λύσει ψυχῆς (in *CA* 26.20); cf. also Köhler’s translation: “‘Meide,’ so lautet er ja, ‘die Speisen!’, was dasselbe bedeutet wie ‘Enthalte dich vergänglicher Körper!’ Da es nun aber unmöglich ist: aller, fährt er fort: ‘von denen wir sprachen’. Und wo darüber geredet ist, deutet er an: ‘unter Reinigungen und Seelenerlösung’” (*Hierokles*, 92).

⁵²⁵ It is not certain whether this title originated with Empedocles himself; Wright suspects that it is a later addition: “Probably Empedocles’ pleas for the protection of animal and plant life were later associated with Orphic and Pythagorean precepts, and a title appropriate for them used for Empedocles’ poem” (*Empedocles*, 86). For Abaris and Epimenides, see *Suda*, s.vv. Ἀβαρίς, Ἐπιμενίδης (= DK 3A2). For the existence of such texts, see also Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 2.244–45.

books they use in their ritual, and make not only ordinary men but states believe that there really are by means of sacrifice and pleasant sport *deliverances of, and purifications for deeds of injustice* for those still living, but also for the defunct, which they call rites, that deliver us from evils in that other world, while terrible things await those who have neglected to sacrifice.⁵²⁶

These books may well have carried titles like *Καθαρμοί* and *Λύσεις ψυχῆς*. Kern indeed assigns a couple of fragments to an Orphic poem called *Καθαρμοί*, but the existence of such a poem has been denied.⁵²⁷ Be that as it may, the fragments cited by Kern deal with abstaining from beans and meat, a topic that fits our present context very well. Empedocles' poem also had as one of its themes a prohibition against eating meat.⁵²⁸ What is more, in GV 71 the author quotes a verse from Empedocles' *Καθαρμοί*. The works to which the author refers probably belong to the same 'genre' as these other works with similar titles.⁵²⁹

In other 'instruction' texts we find similar references to other works, either to texts by the author himself or to texts forming part of the same teaching tradition.⁵³⁰ It is perhaps of some significance that the author uses the first person plural (*εἵπομεν*) here, but the first person singular elsewhere (cf. GV 24, 34, 65). The plural may indicate that these texts were not written by the author himself, but that they belong to the same doctrinal tradition; the 'we' would then be an inclusive reference to all the teachers past and present of this tradition.⁵³¹

⁵²⁶ *Resp.* 364bc, e; trans. Paul Shorey, LCL; adapted and emphasis added. This passage is in part to be found in Orphic frg. 3 Kern = Orpheus frg. 5 DK. For a more sympathetic account, cf. also Plato *Phdr.* 244de. See on such priestly 'craftsmen,' Burkert, "Craft Versus Sect," 3-12.

⁵²⁷ Orphic frgs. 291-92. Ziegler is skeptical ("Orphische Dichtung," 1410).

⁵²⁸ Cf. Hippolytus *Haer.* 7.30.3-4; Aristotle *Rh.* 1373b14-17; Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 9.127-29; also Wright, *Empedocles*, 81.

⁵²⁹ The titles of the works cited by the author sound "rather Orphic" to Thesleff (*Introduction*, 107). Cf. also Rostagni, *RFIC* n.s. 9 (1933) 88: "Un rifacimento di tal genere erano anche, a mio avviso, i *Χρυσὰ ἔπη*."

⁵³⁰ Cf. *Corp. Herm.* 10.1, 7; 13.1; *Exc. Herm. Stob.* 3.1, 6.1 (all of which refer to a work called οἱ Γενικοὶ λόγοι; see William C. Grese, *Corpus Hermeticum XIII and Early Christian Literature* [SCHNT 5; Leiden: Brill, 1979] 67-69); *PGM* 13.21, 229 (where the author refers to a work called "The Key of Moses"; see the commentary by Morton Smith in Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation 1* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986] 172 nn. 2, 8).

⁵³¹ Cf. also Hierocles in *CA* 27.11: The poem is a "joint statement of the whole saintly community" (*ἀπόφθεγμα κοινόν ὅλου τοῦ ἱεροῦ συλλόγου*).

We can only guess at the kinds of food from which the student has to abstain. They would most probably include various types of meat and beans, since these items feature most prominently in lists of prohibited food.⁵³² One of the main reasons for the prohibition of both meat and beans by Pythagoreans and Orphics was based on the doctrine of the metempsychosis. Souls could be incarnated into any living being; one should therefore refrain from eating anything that may be inhabited by a soul.⁵³³ In theory this position should have led to a strict vegetarianism, but our sources on early Pythagoreanism disagree as to the degree of abstinence required. The testimonies fall into three classes.⁵³⁴ Some affirm an absolute prohibition of animal flesh;⁵³⁵ according to others, including Aristotle, only certain types of meat or certain parts of an animal were excluded (parts of sacrificial meat in particular were allowed);⁵³⁶ others again, probably following Aristoxenus, deny the existence of any dietary ban whatsoever.⁵³⁷ It is possible that early Pythagoreans differed in their attitude toward abstinence,⁵³⁸

⁵³² Cf. the lists of ritual laws of Greek mystery cults in Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 177–78; see also Parker, *Miasma*, appendix 4 (“Animals and Food”). For Pythagoreanism, see Boehm, “De symbolis Pythagoreis,” 14–27; Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.184–85, 187–95; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 180–85; Marcel Detienne, *The Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology* (Hassocks: Harvester, 1977) 37–58. For vegetarianism in antiquity, see Johannes Haussleiter, *Der Vegetarismus in der Antike* (RGV 24; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1935), esp. pp. 79–163 and 296–314 (on Pythagoreans and Neopythagoreans); Jean Bouffartique and Michel Patillon, eds., *Porphyre: De l’abstinence* 1 (Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1977) lxi–lxviii; Daniel A. Dombrowski, *The Philosophy of Vegetarianism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984). See in general also Rudolf Arbesmann, “Fasten,” *RAC* 7 (1969) 447–93, esp. 449–51, 465–71.

⁵³³ The technical expression for abstaining from animal food is ἀπέχεσθαι (ἀποχή) τῶν ἐμψύχων, as is also reflected in the title of Porphyry’s work on this subject (περὶ ἀποχῆς ἐμψύχων). In Iamblichus *VP* 109 ἀπέχεσθαι is used interchangeably with εἰργεσθαι, the term used in *GV* 67.

⁵³⁴ For a valuable survey of the evidence, see Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.187–91. Cf. also Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 180–83.

⁵³⁵ Cf. Eudoxus ap. Porphyry *VP* 7; Onesicritus ap. Strabo 15.716 (both in *DK* 14.9); fragments by poets of Middle Comedy such as Antiphanes, Alexis, Aristophan, and Mnesimachus collected in *DK* 58E; Cicero *Rep.* 3.19; Sextus Empiricus *Math.* 9.128; Diogenes Laertius 8.13; Iamblichus *VP* 68, 168.

⁵³⁶ Cf. Aristotle ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.34; Alexander Polyhistor ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.33; Plutarch *Quaest. conv.* 8.729c; Iamblichus *VP* 85, 98; Porphyry *VP* 34, 42–45; *Abst.* 1.26.3, 2.28.2.

⁵³⁷ Cf. Aristoxenus frgs. 25, 28, 29 Wehrli; Diogenes Laertius 8.12; Porphyry *VP* 15; Iamblichus *VP* 25.

⁵³⁸ Nicomachus relates the differences to the various Pythagorean groupings: θεωρητικοί practiced absolute abstinence, while πολιτικοί or ἀκουσματικοί ate meat, albeit seldom (ap. Iamblichus *VP* 107–9, 150). If there is any truth in this, we would expect the opposite relationship to hold, namely, that the θεωρητικοί, with whom Aristoxenus was familiar, were

but some form of abstinence was probably practiced by most. Empedocles, Neopythagoreans like Apollonius of Tyana, and Pythagoreanizing Stoics like Quintus Sextius and Seneca's teacher Sotion were more consistent; they abstained from meat altogether.⁵³⁹

The connection between beans and metempsychosis is more obscure.⁵⁴⁰ According to Aristotle, Pythagoreans think beans are like the 'gates of Hades,' since they have no nodes or joints; a scholiast on Homer affirms that souls return to earth from the underworld through bean blossoms.⁵⁴¹ Varro states that beans contain the souls of the dead.⁵⁴² Beans and human beings originate from the same primal matter.⁵⁴³ According to other reports beans resemble the genitalia and smell like semen; they may be transformed magically into blood or into forms resembling a child's head or female pudenda.⁵⁴⁴ To eat beans is the same as eating the heads of one's parents.⁵⁴⁵

Another, perhaps equally important reason for abstaining from foods like meat and beans, was that these foods were considered either impure or sacred; eating them therefore involved the soul in pollution which was detrimental to its relationship with god.⁵⁴⁶

prepared to eat meat, while the more conservative *ἀκουσματικοί* banned meat altogether. See Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 181.

⁵³⁹ Cf. Empedocles frgs. 128, 136–39 DK = frgs. 118, 122, 124, 125, 120 Wright; Philostratus VA 1.8, 1.32, 8.7.4; Seneca Ep. 108.17–21.

⁵⁴⁰ Of the various alternative explanations proposed in antiquity for the prohibition of beans, "the interpretations that are most closely related to genuine Pythagoreanism are those which connect beans with the doctrine of metempsychosis" (Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 183). See also Miroslav Marcovich, "Pythagorica," *Philologus* 108 (1964) 29–44, esp. 29–39. For the Pythagorean taboo on beans, see Boehm, "De symbolis Pythagoreis," 14–17; Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.184–85; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 183–84. Cf. Iamblichus VP 109: καὶ 'κνάμων ἀπέχου' διὰ πολλὰς ἱεράς τε καὶ φυσικὰς καὶ εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνηκούσας αἰτίας.

⁵⁴¹ Aristotle ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.34; scholion T on Homer Il. 13.589 (reconstituted as a couplet by Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 232). Cf. also Porphyry *De antr. nymph.* 19.

⁵⁴² Ap. Pliny HN 18.118.

⁵⁴³ Cf. Porphyry VP 44.

⁵⁴⁴ Cf. Aristotle frg. 195 Rose = Diogenes Laertius 8.34; Hippolytus Haer. 1.2.14–15; Lucian Vit. auct. 6; Diogenes Antonius ap. Lydus Mens. 4.42 = Porphyry VP 44. See also the discussion by Marcovich, "Pythagorica," 29–36.

⁵⁴⁵ ἰσὺν τοι κνάμων τε φάγειν κεφαλὰς τε τοκῶν. For references to this often quoted saying, see Nauck, "De aureo carmine," 231–32; Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 23nn; Kern, *Orphicorum fragmenta*, 301–2 (where it is quoted as Orphic frg. 291). According to Detienne, "in the system of Pythagorean foods, eating the bean is seen as an original, secret and exclusive way of symbolising the eating of meat and the practice of blood sacrifice"; beans represent death and putrefication, while life is represented by spices and grain (*Gardens of Adonis*, 51).

⁵⁴⁶ According to Arbesmann, this was the major reason for Pythagoreans, followed by

According to Iamblichus, all of Pythagoras' rules regarding abstinence pertain to the purity of the soul; some foods prevent man from communion with the gods; others are sacred to the gods and should not be commonly used; some foods have a negative effect on the soul's ability to communicate with the divine sphere through dreams and divination:

τῶν δὴ βρωμάτων καθόλου τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀπεδοκίμαζεν, ὅσα πνευματώδη καὶ ταραχῆς αἷτια.... καθόλου δὲ ἀπεδοκίμαζε καὶ τὰ τοῖς θεοῖς ἀλλότρια ὡς ἀπάγοντα ἡμᾶς τῆς πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς οἰκείωσως. κατ' ἄλλον δὲ αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ τῶν νομιζομένων εἶναι ἱερῶν σφόδρα ἀπέχεσθαι παρήγγελλεν ὡς τιμῆς ἀξίων ὄντων, ἄλλ' οὐχὶ τῆς κοινῆς καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης χρήσεως, καὶ ὅσα δὲ εἰς μαντικὴν ἐνεπὶδίδεν ἢ πρὸς καθαρότητα τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἀγνείαν ἢ πρὸς σωφροσύνης καὶ ἀρετῆς ἔξιν, παρῆναι φυλάττεσθαι. καὶ τὰ πρὸς εὐάγειαν δὲ ἐναντίως ἔχοντα καὶ ἐπιθολοῦντα τῆς ψυχῆς τάς τε ἄλλας καθαρότητας καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὕπνοις φαντάσματα παρηγεῖτο.

He rejected entirely, then, all such foods as cause flatulence and disturbance.... He entirely rejected foods which are foreign to the gods because they divert us from kinship with the gods. Again, on another basis, he emphatically commended abstention from foods believed sacred since they are worthy of honor, and not for common and human consumption. And he advised one to guard against whatever hindered prophesy, purity of soul and chastity, or a settled condition of sound-mindedness and virtue. He also deprecated things opposed to alertness and which muddy the soul's purity in general, and visions in dreams in particular. (VP 106-7; trans. Dillon and Hershbelle, *Iamblichus*, 131)

Beans, for instance, are difficult to digest and cause flatulence, and thus disturb a person's spiritual equilibrium (cf. *πνευματώδη καὶ ταραχῆς αἷτια* in the quotation above).⁵⁴⁷ Also, a light, meat-

metempsychosis and "Motive rationaler (hygienischer) u[nd] ethischer Art" ("Fasten," 466-67 [with references], 470).

⁵⁴⁷ Cf. Cicero Div. 1.62: *Iubet igitur Plato sic ad somnum proficisci corporibus affectis, ut nihil sit quod errorem animis perturbationemque afferat. Ex quo etiam Pythagoricis interdictum putatur ne faba vescerentur, quod habet inflationem magnam in cibis tranquillitati mentis quaerentis vera contrariam*; also 2.119. See Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 184: "We dare not take too lightly the rationalizing, physiological explanation, based on the difficulty of digesting beans. The seer or sage is very sensitive to small physical disturbances." For the recent debate on medical explanations for the bean taboo, see R. S. Brumbaugh and J. Schwartz, "Pythagoras and Beans: A Medical Explanation," *CW* 73 (1980) 421-23; M. D. Grmek, "La légende et la réalité de la novicité des fèves," *HPLS* 2 (1980) 61-121; J. Scarborough, "Beans, Pythagoras, Taboos, and Ancient Dietetics," *CW* 75 (1982) 355-58.

less diet sharpens one's spiritual perception, while a diet containing meat weighs the soul down.⁵⁴⁸ Other considerations are self-sufficiency and a simple live style. Meat is an unnecessary luxury; abstinence promotes simplicity.⁵⁴⁹ This motivation was especially characteristic of the Cynic approach, but of course by no means confined to them.⁵⁵⁰

The rationale underlying the command in GV 67–68a may perhaps be inferred from the titles *Καθαρμοί* and *Λῦσις ψυχῆς*. If these titles are at all descriptive of the contents of the works, abstinence pertains to the purification and deliverance of the soul. Purification may have either a ritual or a moral connotation.⁵⁵¹ If eating meat involves the soul in cannibalism or some other ritual defilement, it has to be purified and saved. This seems to be the goal of the Orphic rites to which Plato refers.⁵⁵² Elsewhere, however, Plato uses very similar expressions to refer to the release of the soul from the body. The soul is tainted by its contact with the body; purification involves

the separation of the soul from the body, and, in the place of water, eggs, and the blood of pigs, its agents are self-restraint, justice, courage, and intellectual activity itself.... Plato is not referring to a temporary preparation for ritual activity but to a way of life whose aim is purification. This purity is sought as a way of salvation; what matters is a pure death, for which a pure life is only a preparation.⁵⁵³

⁵⁴⁸ Cf. Anonymus Photii, p. 238.11–15 Thesleff; Seneca *Ep.* 108.22; Philostratus *VA* 1.8, 8.7.9; also Musonius Rufus frg. 18a, p. 112.18–23 Lutz.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. Diogenes Laertius 8.13; Diodorus 10.7.

⁵⁵⁰ See Arbesmann, "Fasten," 465–66.

⁵⁵¹ For a good discussion of the various functions of purification and its relation to salvation, see Parker, *Miasma*, chap. 10.

⁵⁵² *Resp.* 364e; see p. 216 above. Cf. also *Phdr.* 244de. This is also the context in which Alexander Polyhistor's *Pythagorean Memoirs* place abstinence: τὴν δ' ἀγνεῖαν εἶναι διὰ καθαρῶν καὶ λουτρῶν καὶ περιρραντηρίων καὶ διὰ τοῦ καθαρεῦν ἀπὸ τε κήδους καὶ λεχοῦς καὶ μιάσματος παντὸς καὶ ἀπέχεσθαι βρωτῶν θηρσιδίῳ τε κρεῶν καὶ τριγλῶν καὶ μελανούρων καὶ ψῶν καὶ τῶν ψοτόκων ζώων καὶ κνάμων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὧν παρακελεύονται καὶ οἱ τὰς τελευτὰς ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἐπιτελοῦντες (ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.33). For the ritualistic meaning of *καθαρμοί*, see Theodor Wächter, *Reinheitsvorschriften im griechischen Kult* (RGVV 9/1; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1910); Rohde, *Psyche* 2.69–80; Parker, *Miasma*; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 75–84. Cf. also Pseudo-Phocylides 228 (ἀγνεΐη ψυχῆς, οὐ σώματος εἰσι καθαρμοί), with the commentary by van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 258–60.

⁵⁵³ Parker, *Miasma*, 282; see pp. 281–83. Cf. Plato *Phd.* 67a, c: καθαρισ ... τὸ χωρίζειν ὅ τι μάλιστα ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ἐθίσει αὐτὴν ... οἰκεῖν κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν παρόντι καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔπειτα μόνῃ καθ' αὐτὴν, ἐκλυομένην ὥσπερ ἐκ δεσμῶν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος; 67d: θάνατος ... λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος; 82d: τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ ... καὶ τῇ ἐκείνης λύσει τε καὶ καθαρῷ ταύτῃ; 83ab; *Resp.* 515c: λύσιν τε καὶ ἴασιν τῶν δεσμῶν καὶ τῆς ἀφροσύνης. For Plato's doctrine of the purification and salvation

In the *Golden Verses* too, the emphasis is on a moral purification, which was previously called a 'healing' of the soul (GV 66). Certain foods have to be avoided because they reinforce the hold of the body on the soul,⁵⁵⁴ or perhaps—following Iamblichus' explanation—because they pollute the soul. These two reasons are of course not mutually exclusive. We thus have a certain parallelism between 'healing' and 'saving' the soul (GV 66), on the one hand, and the titles *Purifications* and *Deliverance of the Soul* (GV 67–68), on the other.

In the later period abstinence from meat as a philosophical topic was extensively discussed by authors like Plutarch and Porphyry.⁵⁵⁵ Jews of course had detailed dietary regulations, while some early Christians also abstained from blood, (sacrificial) meat, and other unspecified foods.⁵⁵⁶

68b–69 If κρίνων is not connected with ἔν τε καθαρμοῖς ἔν τε λύσει ψυχῆς, it can only be a qualification of εἴργον.⁵⁵⁷ The student is thus commanded to use his judgment when deciding from what he has to abstain, using the two works of his particular sect as guide. This implies that the dietary regulations contained in these works are in need of interpretation; they cannot consist of simple rules such as "Do not eat meat and beans."⁵⁵⁸ Their com-

of the soul, see also Rohde, *Psyche* 2.285–86; Carl Andresen, "Erlösung," *RAC* 6 (1962) 76–79.

⁵⁵⁴ So Iamblichus Arab. in *CA* Q 623–24; Proclus Arab. in *CA* f. 112.

⁵⁵⁵ Cf. Plutarch *De esu carniū* I, II; Porphyry *De abstinentia*. For Plutarch, see Damianos Tsekourakis, "Pythagoreanism or Platonism and Ancient Medicine? The Reasons for Vegetarianism in Plutarch's 'Moralia,'" *ANRW* II.36.1 (1987) 366–93; for Porphyry, Daniel A. Dombrowski, "Porphyry and Vegetarianism: A Contemporary Philosophical Approach," *ANRW* II.36.2 (1987) 774–91. See in general (on Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Theophrastus, Plutarch, Plotinus, and Porphyry) Dombrowski, *Philosophy of Vegetarianism*.

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. Acts 15:20, 29; 1 Cor 8:8–10; Rev 2:14, 20; Rom 14:2, 21; Col 2:16, 21. Pythagorean influence has been suspected in Colossae; see Eduard Schweizer, *Der Brief an die Kolosser* (EKKNT 12; Zurich: Benziger Verlag, 1976) 103–4, 217–18; van der Waerden, *Pythagoreer*, 86–87. See in general also Robert M. Grant, "Dietary Laws among Pythagoreans, Jews, and Christians," *HThR* 73 (1980) 209–310.

⁵⁵⁷ Van der Horst, however, makes κρίνων dependent on φράξεν; he then translates: "Quand tu fais un choix, réfléchis alors aussi à chaque chose" (*Vers d'or*, 67–68).

⁵⁵⁸ Cf. Méautis, *Sagesse pythagoricienne*, 43: "L'auteur insiste cependant sur le fait qu'il ne saurait y avoir, dans ce domaine de l'alimentation et du régime, des règles strictes et absolues; chaque cas doit être étudié séparément à la lumière de la raison." Cf. also the complex, albeit very specific, dietary prohibitions in Diogenes Laertius 8.33–34 and in the *akousmata* in general; see Boehm, "De symbolis Pythagoreis," 14–27.

plex and detailed nature may well be the reason why these rules are not quoted in the *Golden Verses*. It would be idle, however, to speculate any further on their precise contents.

γνώμη is the faculty of judgment that should be put into control of the decisions to be made.⁵⁵⁹ We also find γνώμη in one of the *akousmata*: τί κράτιστον; γνώμη ("What is most powerful? Judgment").⁵⁶⁰ The image of the charioteer is best known from Plato's use of it in the *Phaedrus* (246-48). The νοῦς as charioteer (Plato also uses the term ἡνίοχος) has to guide two horses, the good and bad inclinations in the soul.⁵⁶¹ The metaphor of the charioteer contrasts with the simile of the uncontrolled boulders of GV 57-58.⁵⁶²

Since abstinence falls within the domain of the virtue of moderation, and judgment within that of the virtue of moral insight, GV 67-69 are related to the topics of the central section of the poem (GV 27-39). Even so, these verses appear to be somewhat of an afterthought, an impression reinforced by the use of ἀλλ(ά) in GV 67.⁵⁶³

GV 70-71

ἦν δ' ἀπολείψας σῶμα ἐς αἰθέρ' ἐλεύθερον ἔλθῃς,
ἔσσεαι ἀθάνατος, θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός.

Then, if you leave the body behind and go to the free *aither*,
you will be immortal, an undying god, no longer mortal.

The poem ends in a climactic eschatological promise: having mastered the precepts given and the doctrines intimated in the *Golden*

⁵⁵⁹ For its meaning see LSJ, s.v. γνώμη II; Rudolf Bultmann, "γινώσκω κτλ," *TDNT* 1.691 n. 7; Pierre Huart, ΓΝΩΜΗ chez Thucydide et ses contemporains (*Sophocle, Euripide, Antiphon, Andocide, Aristophane*): Contribution à l'histoire des idées à Athènes dans la seconde moitié du Ve siècle av. J.-C. (Études et commentaires 81; Paris: Klincksieck, 1973), esp. chap. 3 ("Γνώμη = Réflexion, faculté de juger, pensée, jugement"); Dihle, *Theory of Will*, 28-30, esp. 28-29: "Γνώμη and γινώσκω mostly have double connotations: adequate perception of and reflection on reality plus a right decision to act according to that insight."

⁵⁶⁰ Ap. Iamblichus VP 82. Cf. Theognis 1171: γνώμην, Κύρνε, θεοὶ θνητοῖσι διδοῦσιν ἀρίστην; Epictetus *Ench.* 31.1: ... πᾶσι τοῖς γινόμενοις καὶ ἀκολουθεῖν ἐκόντα ὡς ὑπὸ τῆς ἀρίστης γνώμης ἐπιτελουμένοις.

⁵⁶¹ Iamblichus interprets γνώμην in GV 69 as νοῦς (*Protr.* 3, p. 15.22-23).

⁵⁶² For this metaphor, cf. Demophilus *Similitudines* 34 (Mullach, *FPG* 1.486): 'Ο ἐκ φιλοσοφίας νοῦς ἔοικεν ἡνίοχῳ· περίεστι γὰρ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἐπιθυμιῶν, αἰεὶ μεταγῶν αὐτὰς εἰς τὸ καλόν; [Isocrates] *Demonic.* 32; Linus frg. 10.9-10 West; *Teachings of Silvanus* 90.10-17.

⁵⁶³ G. Bernhardt suggests that GV 67-71 are a late addition by a half-learned compiler (*Grundriß der griechischen Literatur* [2 vols.; 3d ed.; Halle: Anton, 1861-72] 2.1.538). This is an overreaction.

Verses, the student will be able to look forward to a blessed existence among the immortals in the afterlife. This promise should be understood as a continuation of the promise in *GV* 65–66 which is based on participation in the mysteries and proficiency in the precepts. The latter promise indicates the immediate advantages of this way of life—freedom from suffering—while *GV* 70–71 disclose the ultimate, *post-mortem* benefit. The previous verses (*GV* 67–69) are therefore somewhat parenthetical. On the other hand, the author may well have considered the latter a reformulation and extension of the basic moral focus of the poem, namely, the practice of moral insight and moderation, so that the concluding verses have a ring-structure: A (promise of present advantage), B (re-statement of requirements), A' (promise of felicity after death).

70 ἦν has a temporal function in *GV* 70; it is the equivalent of 'when.'⁵⁶⁴ The subordinate clause describes what happens at the moment of death, rather than indicating the condition for becoming a god. In this context the condition for becoming a god is not going to the αἰθήρ, but practicing the prescribed life. We may perhaps see in ἀπολείψας σῶμα an allusion to the Orphic doctrine of the body as 'prison' of the soul,⁵⁶⁵ an inference that finds some support in the contrasting epithet ἐλεύθερον applied to the αἰθήρ. It becomes even more probable if we read ἐλεύθερος as Calcidius and the Arabic version do,⁵⁶⁶ but the same effect is achieved if we understand ἐλεύθερον as a transferred epithet.⁵⁶⁷

In early Greek thought, the αἰθήρ was located in the uppermost region, above the layer of air. Homer often equates it with οὐρανός as dwelling place of the gods.⁵⁶⁸ The notion that the body is

⁵⁶⁴ Cf. the translation of these verses in Calcidius in *Tim.* 136: *Pythagoras etiam in suis Aureis versibus: 'corpore deposito cum liber ad aethera perges, evades hominem factus deus aetheris almi'*; also van der Horst, *Vers d'or*, 70: "Quand alors ... tu es arrivé dans la sphère libre de la plus haute atmosphère (l'éther) ..." (emphasis added). For this use of ἐάν, see Kühner-Gerth 2.474, § 575.

⁵⁶⁵ Cf. Plato *Crat.* 400bc; *Phd.* 62b, 82e; *Phdr.* 250c; *Grg.* 493a; [Plato] *Axiochus* 365e; [Philolaus] frg. 14 DK. See on the topic in general Pierre Courcelle, "Gefängnis (der Seele)," *RAC* 9 (1976) 294–318; idem, "Grab der Seele," *RAC* 12 (1983) 455–67. Rom 7:24 was interpreted by some Church fathers as a reference to the body as prison of the soul; see "Gefängnis," 304.

⁵⁶⁶ See Calcidius in *Tim.* 136: *cum liber ad aethera perges*; Rosenthal, "Pythagorean Documents," 115: "'You will become free in the air'"; cf. also Ullmann, "Griechische Spruchdichtung," 49; Iamblichus Arab. in *CA* Q 624.18.

⁵⁶⁷ Cf., however, Cicero *Tusc.* 1.51: [*Animus*] *cum exierit in liberum caelum quasi domum suam venerit*; Pollux 5.109: ἀέρι ... ἐλευθέρῳ.

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. Homer *Il.* 2.412: Ζεὺς αἰθέρι ναίων. See Jan Hendrik Waszink, "Aether," *RAC*

left behind at death, but that the soul goes to the αἰθήρ, dates from the 5th century BC, and became part of the popular beliefs concerning the afterlife.⁵⁶⁹ In an epigram for those slain at Potidaea (432 BC) we read, αἰθήρ μὲν ψυχὰς ὑπεδέξατο, σώματα δὲ χθών (“The aither received their souls, the earth their bodies”); other inscriptions also refer to the αἰθήρ as resting place of the soul.⁵⁷⁰ The αἰθήρ was seen as akin to the soul, and therefore also its natural home once it is free from the body. According to the Pseudo-platonic *Axiochus*, “the soul yearns after and is athirst for its native heavenly aither” (ἡ ψυχὴ συναλγοῦσα τὸν οὐράνιον ποθεῖ καὶ σύμφυλον αἰθέρα).⁵⁷¹ Both ideas, namely, the αἰθήρ as dwelling place of the soul and as the material out of which souls are fashioned, are frequently found in Euripides as well, probably under influence of Presocratic philosophers.⁵⁷² As we have seen in the commentary on GV 50–51, the Pythagoreans also associated the soul with the universal ‘breath.’ From the time of Cicero onwards, the notion of the αἰθήρ as abode of the soul became common in Roman thought.⁵⁷³ The heavens as locality of the afterlife is already found in one of the Pythagorean *akousmata*: τί ἐστὶν αἱ μακάρων νῆσοι; ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη (“What are the Isles of the Blest? Sun and moon”).⁵⁷⁴ Probably not all souls went to the free

1 (1950) 150–58, esp. 150–51.

⁵⁶⁹ See Waszink, “Aether,” 154–56. This did not exclude the alternative notion that the soul went to the underworld to be judged; see Dover, *Popular Morality*, 265.

⁵⁷⁰ E.g., IG 1².945. For references to other epigraphic material, see Waszink, “Aether,” 154–55.

⁵⁷¹ [Plato] *Axiochus* 366a; trans. Hershbelt, *Axiochus*, 33; see also his commentary on this passage, p. 57 n. 20. Cf. Alexander Polyhistor ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.28: εἶναι δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπόσπασμα αἰθέρος ... ἀθάνατόν τ’ εἶναι αὐτήν, ἐπειδὴ περ καὶ τὸ ἀφ’ οὗ ἀπέσπασται ἀθάνατόν ἐστι.

⁵⁷² Cf. Euripides *Supp.* 531–34: ἐάσατ’ ἡδὴ γῇ καλυφθῆναι νεκρούς, / ὅθεν δ’ ἔκαστον εἰς τὸ φῶς ἀφίκετο, / ἐνταῦθ’ ἀπελθεῖν, πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα, / τὸ σῶμα δ’ ἐς γῆν; 1148: αἰθήρ ἔχει νιν ἦδη; *El.* 59; *Hel.* 1014–16: ὁ νοῦς / τῶν κατθανόντων ζῇ μὲν οὐ, γνῶμην δ’ ἔχει / ἀθάνατον εἰς ἀθάνατον αἰθέρ’ ἐμπέσων; frgs. 487, 971 Nauck; Aristophanes *Pax* 833: ὡς ἀστέρες γιγνόμεθ’, ὅταν τις ἀποθάνῃ; Epicharmus frg. 9 DK: συνεκρίθη καὶ διεκρίθη κάπηλθεν ὅθεν ἦλθεν πάλιν, / γὰρ μὲν εἰς γὰρ, πνεῦμα δ’ ἄνω; frg. 22: εὐσεβὴς νόψ πεφυκὼς οὐ πάθοις κ’ οὐδὲν κακόν / κατθανών ἄνω τὸ πνεῦμα διαμενεῖ κατ’ οὐρανόν. See Rohde, *Psyche* 2.255–61; Waszink, “Aether,” 154; Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.470–71; Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 360–62; idem, *Greek Religion*, 319–20. Cf. further Pseudo-Phocylides 107–8: σῶμα γὰρ ἐκ γαίης ἔχομεν κάπνεται πρὸς αὐτὴν / λυόμενοι κόνις ἐσμέν ἄηρ δ’ ἀνὰ πνεῦμα δέδεκται. The commentary by van der Horst contains still more references (*Pseudo-Phocylides*, 191–92).

⁵⁷³ Cf., e.g., Cicero *Tusc.* 1.51 (quoted above, n. 567). See Waszink, “Aether,” 156.

⁵⁷⁴ Aristotle ap. Iamblichus *VP* 82. For a valuable survey of the evidence on a Pythagorean origin for the doctrine of astral immortality, see Burkert, *Lore and Science*,

αἰθήρ; this was reserved for the pure.⁵⁷⁵ Going to the αἰθήρ is thus closely associated with becoming an immortal god.

71 The startling promise that the student will be an immortal god is strongly emphasized by the threefold repetition of ἀθάνατος, ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός.⁵⁷⁶ The last half of *GV* 71 is taken from Empedocles, but the context differs; Empedocles claims that he is an immortal god in this life already:⁵⁷⁷

χαίρετ'· ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός
 πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικεν ...

Greetings! I tell you I travel up and down as an immortal god, mortal no longer, honored by all as it seems ...

A closer parallel, contextually, is provided by the Gold Leaves to which I have referred above. The soul, addressing Persephone and the other 'immortal gods' (ἀθάνατοι θεοί), asserts its own purity and divine origin:⁵⁷⁸

357–68. See also Cumont, *After Life*, 91–109; *Lux Perpetua*, 142–88. He overemphasizes the Pythagorean influence, however.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. Alexander Polyhistor ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.31: τὸν δ' Ἑρμῆν ταμίαν εἶναι τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πομπαῖον λέγεσθαι καὶ πυλαῖον καὶ χθόνιον, ἐπειδὴ περ οὗτος εἰσπέμπει ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπὸ τε γῆς καὶ ἐκ θαλάττης· καὶ ἄγεσθαι τὰς μὲν καθαρὰς ἐπὶ τὸν ὕψιστον, τὰς δ' ἀκαθάρτους μὴτ' ἐκείναις πελάζειν μὴτ' ἀλλήλαις, δεῖσθαι δ' ἐν ἀρρήτοις δεσμοῖς ὑπ' Ἑρινύων. Cf. also Plato *Phd.* 69c: it is taught in the mystery cults that only the purified will dwell with the gods; the others will lie in the mire. For this notion in epigraphic material, see Nowak, "Entwicklungsgeschichte," 18 n. 3. For the coexistence in ancient Pythagoreanism of a belief in a subterrestrial Hades and in the celestial location of the Isles of the Blest, see Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 364.

⁵⁷⁶ Pace Farina, who cannot believe the promise is to be taken seriously: "Naturalmente non si deve pensare ad una deificazione in senso letterale, bensì ad una rassomiglianza in saggezza giustizia e sanità" (*Versi aurei*, 44 n. 49). For the expression "immortal, no longer mortal," cf. the following grave inscription from somewhere in Egypt: ἄφθιτος, οὐ θνητή.—θανυμά[ζω.] τίς δ';—Ἰσιδώρα (ed. W. Peek, "Griechische Epigramme aus Ägypten," *Bulletin de la Société royale d'archéologie d'Alexandrie* 27 [1932] 53–54); also *Corp. Herm.* 4.5: ἀθάνατοι ἀντὶ θνητῶν εἰσι; Lucian *Dial. D.* 4.3, 5: Ganymede is οὐκέτι ἄνθρωπος ἀλλ' ἀθάνατος.

⁵⁷⁷ Empedocles frg. 112.4–5 DK = 102.4–5 Wright; trans. Wright, *Empedocles*, 264. For this claim, see Zuntz, *Persephone*, 189–91; a different interpretation is given by Wright, *Empedocles*, 266. Cf. Empedocles frg. 132 Wright = frg. 146 DK (ap. Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* 4.150.1): φησὶ δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἑμπεδόκλης τῶν σοφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεοὺς γίνεσθαι ὥδ' ὡς γράφω· εἰς δὲ τέλος μάντιες τε καὶ ὑμνόπολοι καὶ ἱητροί / καὶ πρόμοι ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπιχθονίοισι πέλονται / ἔθεν ἀναβλαστοῦσι θεοὶ τιμῇσι φέριστοι. See also Detienne, *Daimôn dans le pythagorisme*, 99.

⁵⁷⁸ For this interpretation of the first line, see Zuntz, *Persephone*, 306–8.

ἔρχομαι ἐκ κοθαρῶν κοθαρά, χθονίων βασιλεία,
 Εὐκλήης Εὐβουλεύς τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι·
 καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὖχομαι εἶμεν.

Persephone then answers with a makarism in which she pronounces it “a god instead of a mortal”:

ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ, θεὸς δ' ἔσῃ ἀντὶ βροτοῖο.⁵⁷⁹

This (or a similar) makarism is only found in two of the four gold leaves of this type, a circumstance which has lead Zuntz (following Rohde) to conclude that the persons with whom these particular leaves were buried, had reached the final cycle of reincarnation, while the other persons eventually had to return to the ‘cycle of generation’ after a period of respite.⁵⁸⁰

Should we assume the same background for the *Golden Verses*? To be sure, there is no reference in the poem to a doctrine of metempsychosis,⁵⁸¹ but is it possible that a ‘Pythagorean’ could have an eschatology without it? Delatte and van der Horst think not; they suggest, therefore, that GV 70–71 only refer to what happens after the final stage of purification,⁵⁸² as is the case in Gold Leaves A1 and A4. In view of the abbreviated nature of the doctrinal statements in GV 50–71 this conclusion is perhaps possible, but not very satisfactory. There is, in fact, a tendency in

the later tradition ... to ignore or interpret away the doctrine [of metempsychosis]. There is not a word about metempsychosis in Aëtius.... The *Memoirs* have no place for palingenesis; souls that are pure rise to the “highest,” and the impure are given over to the Erinyes.⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁹ Gold Leaves A1.1–3, 8 Zuntz = Orphic frg. 32c.1–3, 10 Kern = DK 1B18.1–3, 10; for a translation see p. 208 above. Cf. also A4.4 Zuntz = Orphic frg. 32f.4 Kern = DK 1B20.4: θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου. Zuntz has pointed out that the meaning of the ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι whom the soul greets together with Persephone, Eucles, and Eubuleus (in some versions ἀθάνατοι is replaced by δαίμονες), is problematic; a reference to the Olympian deities (the normal meaning in Homer) does not suit the context (*Persephone*, 311–13). Perhaps it refers to souls already ‘deified’ by Persephone; see Nowak, “Entwicklungsgeschichte,” 45.

⁵⁸⁰ See Zuntz, *Persephone*, 336–38; Rohde, *Psyche* 2.217–21.

⁵⁸¹ As we have seen, even the command to abstain from certain foods in GV 67–68 may be based on moral considerations rather than on a doctrine of metempsychosis.

⁵⁸² See Delatte, *Littérature pythagoricienne*, 77; van der Horst, *Vers d’or*, 76. According to Nauck, GV 70–71 prove that the compiler did not understand Pythagoreanism (“De aureo carmine,” 224).

⁵⁸³ Burkert, *Lore and Science*, 123–24. The passage in the *Pythagorean Memoirs* to which Burkert refers, is Diogenes Laertius 8.31, quoted in n. 575 above.

It therefore seems better not to assume a doctrine of metempsychosis without definite and specific evidence.

The immortality of the soul was well-established by Presocratic philosophers; it was also one of the basic tenets of Pythagoreanism.⁵⁸⁴ In Judaism and early Christianity the notion of the immortality of the soul competed with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body.⁵⁸⁵ Both doctrines, though based on different anthropological assumptions, were but expressions of the same desire for the survival of the personal identity after death.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁴ See Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 319–20; Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1.201–2, 314; Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 238, 347–48; Dicaearchus ap. Porphyry VP 19 (= DK 14.8a): μάλιστα μέντοι γνώριμα παρὰ πᾶσιν ἐγένετο πρῶτον μὲν ὡς ἀθάνατον εἶναι φησι τὴν ψυχὴν. Cf. also Iamblichus VP 173, 219; Aëtius 4.7.1; Maximus Tyrius 10.2: Πυθαγόρας δὲ ὁ Σάμιος πρῶτος ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐτόλμησεν εἰπεῖν, ὅτι αὐτῷ τὸ μὲν σῶμα τεθνήσκει, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἀναπτᾶσα οἰχίσεται ἀθανῆς καὶ ἀγήρω; Hippolytus Haer. 6.25.4: λέγει δὲ Πυθαγόρας ... τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ζῶων ἀπὸ τῶν ἄστρον φέρεσθαι. εἶναι δὲ αὐτὰς θητὰς μὲν, ὅταν ὦσιν ἐν τῷ σώματι—οἷον ἐγκατορρωγμένας ἐν τάφῳ—, ἀνίστασθαι δὲ καὶ γίνεσθαι ἀθανάτους, ὅταν τῶν σωμάτων ἀπολυθῶσιν. See in general also Cumont, *After Life*; idem, *Lux Perpetua*. A collection of sources in translation on this topic may be found in Gustav Pfannmüller, *Tod, Jenseits und Unsterblichkeit in der Religion, Literatur und Philosophie der Griechen und Römer* (Munich: Reinhardt, 1953). A very critical survey of the evidence for beliefs in immortality and resurrection in the 2d and 3d centuries AD is given by MacMullen, *Paganism*, 53–57; cf. also Rudolf Bultmann, “θάνατος,” TWNT 3.23: “Im Hellenismus ist das Verlangen nach Unsterblichkeit groß, der Glaube an sie gering.”

⁵⁸⁵ For Judaism, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (HTS 26; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); Hans Clemens Caesarius Cavallin, *Life After Death. Paul's Argument for the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Cor 15 1: An Enquiry into the Jewish Background* (ConBNT 7/1; Lund: Gleerup, 1974); Ulrich Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung im hellenistischen Diasporajudentum* (BZNW 44; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978); Pseudo-Phocylides 103–4, 115, with the commentary by van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 185–88, 195. For early Christianity, cf., e.g., Acts 17:18; 1 Cor 15:35–54; Did. 16.6; Ignatius Eph. 20.2; Justin Apol. 44.9; Dial. 4.2, 80.4–5; Tatian Or. ad Graecos 6, 13.1; Athenagoras Res. 15; Diogn. 6.8: ἀθάνατος ἡ ψυχὴ ἐν θνητῷ σκηνώματι κατοικεῖ; more references in Bauer-Aland, s.v. ἀνάστασις 2; LPGL, s.vv. ἀθανασία B, C; ἀθάνατος C. See in general Bultmann, “θάνατος,” TDNT 3.22–25; Albrecht Oepke, “Auferstehung II (des Menschen),” RAC 1 (1950) 930–38.

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. Cavallin, *Life After Death*, 212 (on the Jewish tradition): “In the same writings, and even the same passages, concepts and symbols from widely differing anthropologies are used in order to express the hope of personal survival of death: immortality of the soul or resurrection of the body. The writers intend to state that the *personality* survives. If the concept of a human person implies a body, it is necessary to state the resurrection of the body, in order to ensure the preservation of the person beyond death. But if the substance of the personality is defined as ‘the soul’, ‘the spirit’ or ‘the mind’, then it is this substance alone which will live after death.” See also idem, “Leben nach dem Tode im Spätjudentum und im frühen Christentum: I. Spätjudentum,” ANRW II.19.1 (1979) 240–345. Fischer emphasizes even more strongly that a belief in the immortality of the soul and in the resurrection of the body was not mutually exclusive in Hellenistic Judaism (*Eschatologie und Jenseitser-*

Surprising though the notion of being a god in the afterlife may be, it is found not only in the Greco-Roman tradition, but remarkably, also in Hellenistic Judaism and even in early Christianity.⁵⁸⁷ In the imperial period it was indeed not unusual for a deceased to be called ‘god’:

Des dieux aux âmes divinisées, la distance, sous l’Empire, n’est pas grande. Les morts sont assimilés aux *δαίμονες* et il n’est pas rare qu’un défunct soit nommé ‘dieu.’ ... Seuls les dieux sont naturellement immortels. Devenir immortel, c’est donc pour l’homme ancien, de quelque façon devenir Dieu.⁵⁸⁸

Becoming a god is the logical consequence of the *σύστασις* of gods and human beings (GV 50–51) and of the divine origin of man (GV 63). Once the bodily ties that bind men to this world are thrown off, the soul is free to return to its origin, henceforth to live in the blessed company of the immortals. The poem has thus come full circle, from a precept to worship the immortal gods in GV 1, to a promise that the student himself will be an immortal god after death.

wartung, 257–58).

⁵⁸⁷ Cf., e.g., *Corp. Herm.* 1.26: τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος τοῖς γνώσιν ἐσχηκόσι, θεωθῆναι; *Anthologia Latina* 2.975.4: *Corpore consumpto viva anima deus sum*; Pseudo-Phocylides 103–4: καὶ τάχα δ’ ἐκ γαίης ἐλπίζομεν εἰς φάος ἐλθεῖν / λείψαν’ ἀποιχομένων ὀπίσω δὲ θεοὶ τελέθονται (for the extensive literature on these verses, see van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 185–88); Theophilus of Antioch *Auiol.* 2.27: εἰ ῥέψῃ ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς ἀθανασίας τηρήσας τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ, μισθὸν κομίσῃται παρ’ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀθανασίαν καὶ γένηται θεός.

⁵⁸⁸ Festugière, *Révélation d’Hermès Trismégiste* 3.139–40, 152 (with references to epigraphic material).

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